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# Standard

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William Tucker on green guru Amory Lovins

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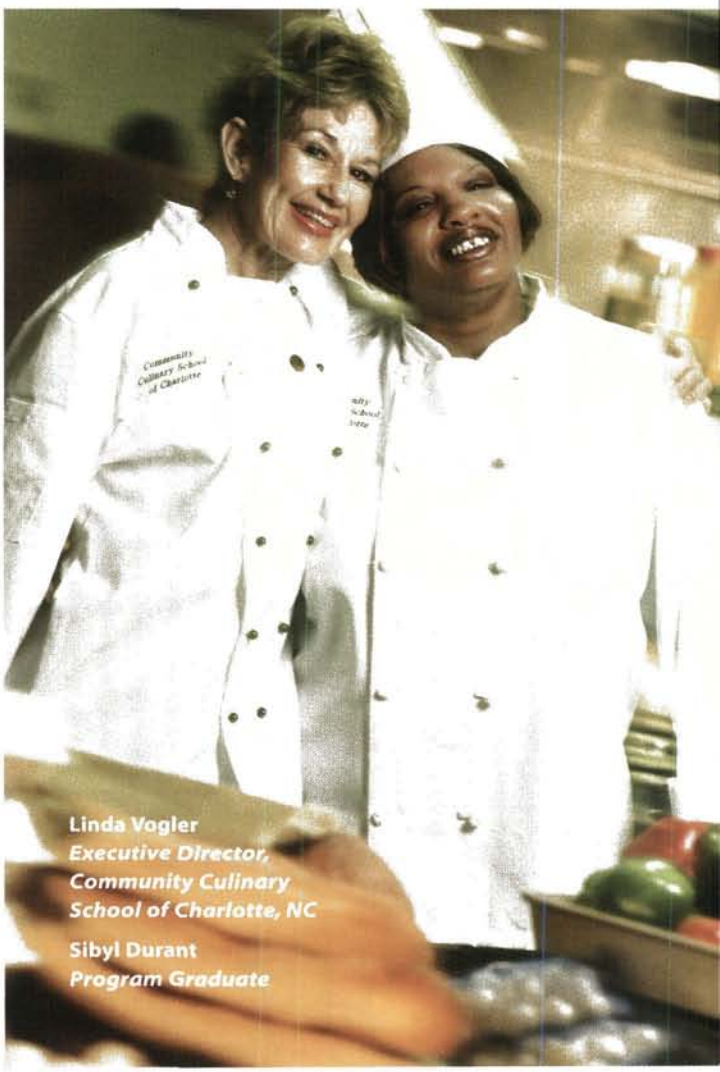

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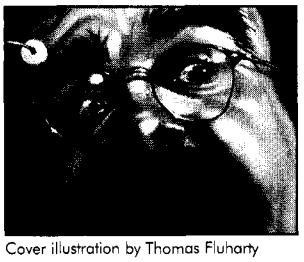

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# Traficant's Jam

Since we last spoke with James Traficant in September, when the Ohio congressman told us he was at "the zenith of my jackasshood," he's had a tough go of it. Before last fall's election, when Democrats still had hopes of gaining a majority in the House, Traficant swore allegiance to GOP speaker Denny Hastert over Dick Gephardt, prompting one Democrat to speculate that Traficant would be made "chairman of the sub-subcommittee on public restrooms." In fact, the congressman whose hair defies gravity and whose wardrobe just defies, didn't fare so well. Vengeful Democrats have seen to it that Traficant is the only congressman since 1905 not to get a committee assignment. Republicans also no longer court him.

And to really complicate his life, the feds are now implying that he's no better than Bob Torricelli. A federal grand jury last week handed down a 10-count indictment, accusing Traficant of everything from taking bribes to demanding kickbacks from his congressional staff. The news is hardly unexpected. For over a year, Traficant has claimed he had a "bullseye on my back," and that the Justice Department, which he calls a "f—ing whorehouse," was out to get him.

Though Traficant is not a lawyer, he is famous for representing himself in his periodic tangles with the feds. Last fall, he told us he had consulted with "my client," and had again elected to go *pro se*. As a public corruption aficionado, THE SCRAPBOOK believes this could be the best show since former Louisiana governor Edwin Edwards told prosecutors, when they asked if he was lying, "No, and if I were, you've got to assume I wouldn't be telling you."

During Traficant's first trial in the early 1980s, when he became the only defendant ever to win his own acquittal in a RICO case, he convinced a jury that he had not accepted bribes from the mob but, rather, was taking their money "out of circulation" in a secret one-man sting operation. Traficant did this in high style, munching cough drops, cursing his way across the courtroom in short sleeves, and asking the judge to help him muddle through the procedures for getting her removed.

During that trial, Traficant declared, "I am prepared to present a statement certifying I am not insane." THE SCRAPBOOK is no lawyer, but we offer the congressman some helpful advice: Go with the insanity defense. We've saved our interview notes, and we think you can make your case. ♦

## Khobar Revisited

In our November 24, 1997, issue, Matt Labash told the harrowing saga of Air Force general Terry Schwalier, commander of the base in Saudi Arabia where terrorists killed 19 of Schwalier's airmen in the Khobar Towers bombing. Secretary of Defense William Cohen hung Schwalier by his thumbs, ignoring the recommendations of Air Force chief of staff Ron Fogleman (who resigned in protest), and suppressing two comprehensive military reports that exonerated Schwalier—all in the name of accountability.

While Schwalier had a star revoked, and his military career was ruined, everyone seemed to forget about holding accountable those who'd caused the deaths: namely, the terrorists. Everyone, apparently, except outgoing FBI chief Louis Freeh. In Elsa Walsh's exhaustive account in last week's *New Yorker*, largely told from Freeh's point of view, it's clear that as was customary in the Clinton administration, there was plenty of cowardice to go around. Walsh reports that Freeh's obsessive pursuit of the Khobar killers bordered on being "theological" and almost led him to urge indicting Iranian government officials, widely believed to be behind the bombing.

But despite Clinton's own vow that "the cowards who committed this murderous act must not go unpunished," his administration, in the interest of diplomacy, seemed to hang back. In fact, Freeh's low regard for Clinton, according to the *New Yorker*'s account, was exacerbated by the administration's handling of the Khobar affair.

While Freeh was trying to pry evidence out of the always circumspect Saudis, Clinton was making overtures to a new Iranian government, leaving doubts about American resolve. The State Department, meanwhile, was making it harder for FBI agents to travel for the investigation. And when Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah arrived in Washington for a meeting with Clinton, in which he was warned there would be some "very important questions" about Khobar, a self-pitying Clinton, mired at the time in the Monica Lewinsky affair, failed to press the case (prompting Freeh to appeal covertly to former president Bush to intervene with the Saudi royal family).

Freeh was finally permitted to ask questions of suspects being held in Saudi custody, who not only admitted their involvement, but described how the Iranians had ordered and financed the attack. Freeh took these reports to national security adviser Sandy Berger,



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who seemed primarily concerned with heading off press attention, while casting aspersions on statements linking the bombing to the Iranian government. Berger claims he just wanted to make sure the suspects' statements were admissible. But as Walsh writes, in some of the piece's most damning language, "Berger, Freeh later thought, was not a national-security adviser; he was a public-relations hack, interested in how something would play in the press. After more than two years, Freeh had concluded that the administration did not really want to resolve the Khobar bombing."

By last fall, the Saudis finally consented to allow suspects to testify if the United States brought indictments against Iranian officials. But Freeh decided not to take any chances. Instead of pressing for indictments under Clinton, he waited for a change of administrations, and even asked for a new federal prosecutor to be assigned to the case.

While Freeh is hopeful that the Bush administration will not oppose the indictments, he may have done the families of the Khobar victims a valuable service with his elegantly simple policy: When it comes to trusting Clintonites to do the right thing instead of the politically expedient one, don't. ♦

## Warming Up to Iran?

If Louis Freeh (see item above) wants to get Iranian officials indicted for the murder of the 19 U.S. airmen in Saudi Arabia in 1996, maybe he'd better try to hurry things along. Brent Scowcroft, the first President Bush's national security adviser and mentor to the current President Bush's NSC adviser, argued in Friday's *Washington Post* that the time is ripe to lift U.S. sanctions against Iran.

His reasoning is less than compelling. Iran has done nothing to deserve what even Scowcroft thinks would be an "unrequited gesture." But the Clinton administration was unenthusiastic about the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, and European companies are therefore being allowed to make money pumping Iranian oil under a waiver from the U.S. government. Americans, he argues, should be allowed to do the same! Sure, this would bring "economic benefit to Iran," but it "might encourage the forces of moderation." Yeah, and it might just as readily encourage the forces of despotic extremism. Let's hope this is just a trial balloon. In which case, this is just a trial hatpin. ♦

## Eastland Ho!

Careful readers will note on this issue's masthead the addition of Terry Eastland as publisher. Mr. Eastland is a former Reagan administration official, a constitutional scholar, and an experienced magazine publisher—as well as a WEEKLY STANDARD contributor. He will, I trust, be a marked improvement over his predecessor as publisher (me), strengthening an already strong business team. My colleagues and I heartily welcome Mr. Eastland aboard.

—*William Kristol*



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# Casual

## Derby Daze

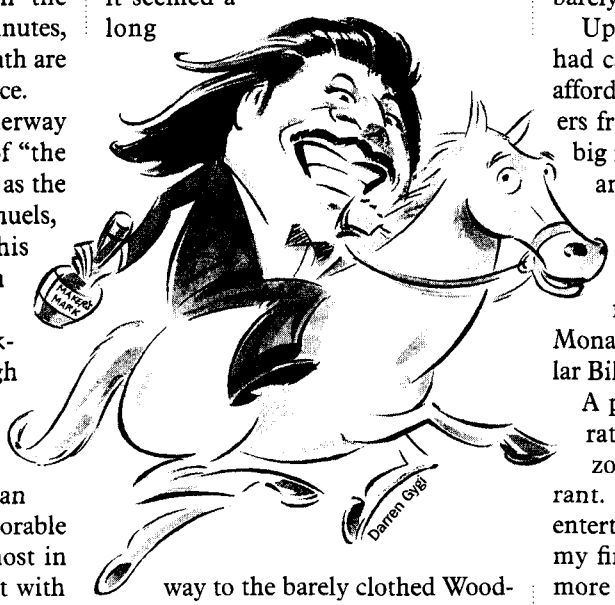
Horseracing is a big deal in Kentucky, and the Kentucky Derby is the pinnacle of the genre. The event is steeped in tradition that features the finest horses, betting, mint juleps, and beautiful women wearing absurd hats. Possessed of an abiding fondness for two of the four, I was thrilled to be invited to attend by Louisville-based political consultant Ted Jackson. The famous race takes place on Saturday at 6:11 in the evening and lasts barely two minutes, but the buildup and the aftermath are a big part of the Derby experience.

Our festivities got underway Thursday night at the home of "the original wild man of bourbon," as the invitation called him—Bill Samuels, CEO of Maker's Mark. This turned out to be a barbecue with entertainment by no less than the original wild man of rock-'n'roll, Little Richard. Although Slightly Decrepit Richard seemed a more appropriate sobriquet, he did manage his famous caterwaul. Nostalgia ran high, but for me the most memorable sight of the evening was our host in his purple lamé sequined jacket with matching hair.

Friday morning brought a trip to the Maker's Mark distillery for a country fair, complete with a questionable Ferris wheel, dunk tank (which Bill Samuels, clad now in red flannels, cheerily mounted), country ham, corn soufflé, and the finest potatoes au gratin you can imagine. Pickled delights in Mason jars on checkered tablecloths, and of course mint juleps, rounded out this Kentucky spread and fortified me for my first sight of Churchill Downs.

This has been home to the Derby since 1875; home, too, of a preliminary race, the Kentucky Oaks, run for the 127th time the day I was there. Making our way, we almost got lost among the tattooed gods of four wheel drive and their shirtless minions of the infield, before eventually achieving the sixth floor clubhouse.

Soon I was feeling right at home, a Washington hack chatting politics with state legislators, a Kentucky congresswoman and gubernatorial possibility, and even a prominent New York congressman who offered a solid tip for one of the races. From up here, it seemed a long way to the barely clothed Woodstock-like revelers below.




After the Oaks, an elegant dinner at Big Springs Country Club was just the ticket, although ten hours of mint juleps may have left one's personal elegance frayed. Sleep did its work in time for Saturday and the big race.

This day began with a country barbecue under the patronage of the *Courier-Journal*. Among the first guests I met were senator Mitch McConnell and his wife, secretary of labor Elaine Chao. McConnell was handing out laminated cards in response to a scathing article the *Courier-Journal* had reprinted from the *New Republic*. The piece makes allegations about the couple's China connections, and the cards carried ersatz *Courier-Journal* headlines like "McConnell Has Secret Meetings with Chinese Pandas" and "McConnell and Chao Spotted at Chinese Restaurant Using Chopsticks."

One more brunch done, it was off to the races. This time we were in the second floor Eclipse Room. With about fifty minutes between races and seven races before the Derby, there was plenty of time to chat with the Colombian ambassador, eat, drink, and watch Pamela Anderson slithering about. Still, I was pleased at the arrival of an escort to take us back up to "Millionaires' Row," the floor of power, courtesy of state senate president David L. Williams. Among the eminences present was Bill Samuels, barely recognizable in a business suit.

Up to this point, sheer ignorance had caused me to avoid betting, and afforded me the chance to watch others fritter away their money. But the big race was coming up. So through an arcane scientific process, I selected number ten, Dollar Bill. "I like the number ten," I reasoned, then placed my forty dollars—in time to watch Monarchos's impressive win and Dollar Bill's finish in penultimate place.

A private dinner hosted by corporate interests followed at Vincenzo's, an excellent Italian restaurant. The Pendinnis Club provided entertainment for several hours. And my final Louisville experience? The more pedestrian Outlook Inn bar in the Highlands neighborhood.

What is unfortunate about Louisville is its similarity to New Orleans: The bars don't seem to close. Next thing I knew, it was 5:15 A.M. My flight was at 6:50. Feeling like a rock star, I was dropped off at my room, picked up my things, and managed to hail a cab to the airport. The gods smiled again, and the gift shop was open. I bought a German shepherd-sized racehorse for my daughter, made my way to the gate, sat down, and made a pillow of Alexandra's new toy. It was Derby time and the living was easy.

**David H. Bass**



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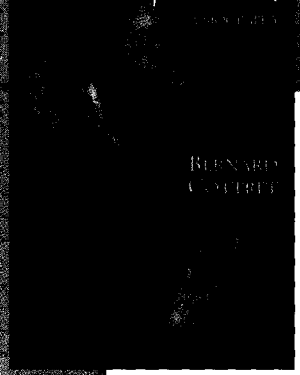
# CALVIN EERDMANS



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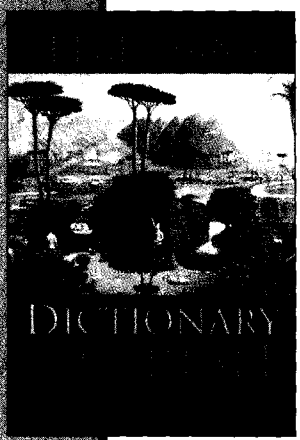


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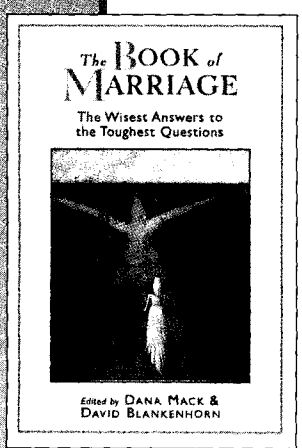


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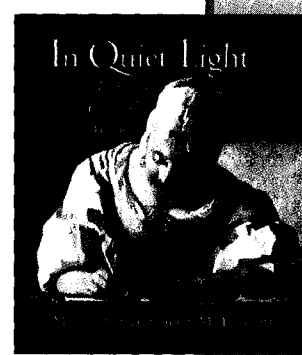


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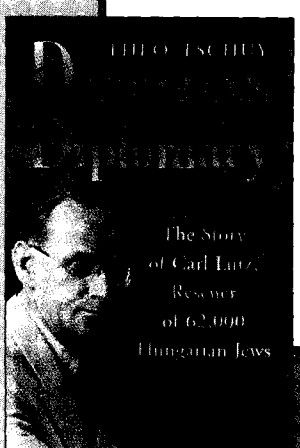


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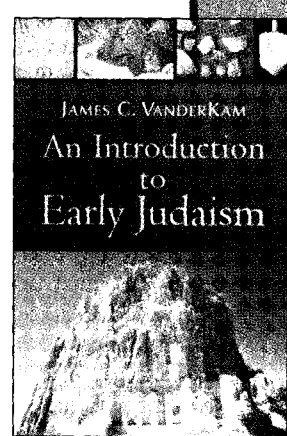


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## Total Control

As chairman of a Senate committee with broad jurisdiction over national security (including export controls, the Defense Production Act, the Trading With the Enemy Act, among other matters), I want to set the record straight about the Export Administration Act of 2001, currently pending in the Senate ("Out of Control?" Ellen Bork, May 14).

The bill was drafted with national security concerns foremost in mind. In the course of three years, the Banking Committee held nine hearings and heard from almost 40 witnesses, nearly all of whom were highly critical of the existing export control regime.

The Export Administration Act of 2001 embodies the most frequently repeated reform theme: that we can protect our interests better by focusing efforts on the technologies we have a hope of controlling, building higher walls around them, with stiffer penalties for breaching those walls.

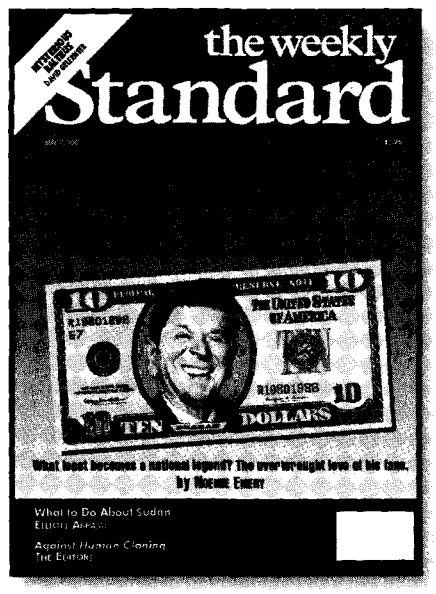
This is the pro-national security approach. We are in good company in advocating it. The bill echoes recommendations from national security experts within and outside of the government, from the 1999 Cox committee on military and commercial relations with China and the 1999 commission on weapons of mass destruction, to the recent joint report of the Stimson Center and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

With enactment of this legislation, the unscrupulous will have a tougher job and will face longer prison sentences and higher fines. At the same time, we end the mindless regulatory paper chase for the law-abiding firms that every day are working on the new technologies that will guarantee that American soldiers and sailors remain the best equipped in the world.

That is why the bill is endorsed by the president's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Secretary of State Colin Powell. Last Wednesday, President Bush reaffirmed his strong support for the bill, "to strengthen both national security and our high-tech industry. In March, I'm pleased to report, the Senate Banking Committee passed a revised EAA, which my administration strongly supports. It's now time for the House to pass it, so I can sign it into law."

I am pleased that the Banking Committee's bill is backed by a formidable array of national security experts in government and in private life. Their expertise may not sway the nameless "old hands at technology transfer" and the anonymous "national security official" cited in earlier articles, but they persuade me that we are on the right track to bringing our export controls in line with the reality of the world today.

Phil Gramm
*Chairman*
*Senate Banking Committee*
*Washington, DC*




## The Clone Wars

Thank you for J. Bottum's excellent article on the human cloning discussion and the need for a total ban ("Against Human Cloning," May 7). You've articulated the case extremely well. Pro-clone forces haven't an ethical, moral, or legal leg upon which to stand. But the same was true for pro-abortion forces, and look what they've wrought. When it comes to these kinds of agendas, ethical, moral, and legal barriers don't seem to matter, and that is where the battle will actually be fought.

I agree with you: Ethical, moral, and legal logic all dictate nothing less than a full ban on any cloning. But how will we make an argument when the other side will all but ignore that logic to get what it wants? That, I fear, is what will happen. The recourse is to make an all-out offensive to educate the public. And it needs to begin yesterday!

Donald McLaughlin
*Granger, IN*

It seems as if J. Bottum is working under the premise that there needs to be a reason to make cloning legal. In a free society, however, you need a reason to make it illegal. I simply fail to see why people are so afraid of this. What is the true philosophical difference of having a baby from the genetic make-up of one person as opposed to two people? What is the real difference of whether I look like my dad or I look exactly like my dad? And it's not even as if I would look exactly like my dad; I would look exactly like he did at my age.

I think it is foolish to believe that just because the host mother did not contribute genetically to the baby, somehow that child will be treated any different or have any less rights. I personally would like to see human cloning as it would help us understand more about what nature or nurture factors truly control the outcome of our lives.

Your argument that there are a high number of deformities in animals is well taken. However, this is an argument of a lack of current technical ability, not an argument for banning the procedure altogether. Organ transplants, no doubt, had a much lower rate of success at first than they have today. But it would have been wrong to cancel the procedures in their infancy because they weren't as successful as desired.

Rick Pruett
*Denver, CO*

I feel that whether we like it or not, human cloning is here to stay. The questions raised in this article are merely things that we as human beings do not want to face because they are a drastic departure from everything we know, and challenge our core moral, religious, and philosophical beliefs.

There has been and will be debate on cloning in the ivory towers as well as in our living rooms as we try to come to terms with this issue. I feel that the scientific positives outweigh the moral neg-



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atives. Besides, for us to think that cloning research will not continue if the United States bans it is foolish. The bottom line is, Americans need to pull their heads out of the sand and deal with the Brave New World of the 21st century.

PAUL BANZ
*Pittsburgh, PA*

## THE SEARCH FOR ADAM

IRWIN M. STELZER'S RECENT PIECE on trade issues tries to invoke Adam Smith in defense of tariffs ("The Limits of Free Trade," April 30):

"And Smith even anticipated modern-day arguments that considerations of fairness justify retaliation 'when some foreign nation restrains by high duties or prohibitions the importation of some of our manufactures into their country.' Smith saw such retaliation as an instrument that just might induce the offending partner to mend its ways. And never mind the economist's argument that such a move is equivalent to shooting oneself in the foot by denying consumers access to the goods of the protection-minded country."

Smith did anticipate the modern argument for retaliatory tariffs. But Smith attributes it to a desire for revenge, not fairness. Smith then discusses France's enthusiasm for the strategy:

"In this consisted a great part of the policy of Mr. Colbert, who, notwithstanding his great abilities, seems in this case to have been imposed upon by the sophistry of merchants and manufacturers, who are always demanding a monopoly against their countrymen. It is at present the opinion of the most intelligent men in France that his operations of this kind have not been beneficial to his country."

Not exactly an endorsement. And while Smith did understand that retaliation could in theory lead to more open borders, he did not, as Stelzer claims, dismiss the argument that it was the equivalent of shooting oneself in the foot:

"When there is no probability that any such repeal [of tariffs by the other nations] can be procured, it seems a bad method of compensating the injury done to certain classes of our people to do another injury ourselves, not only to those classes, but to almost all the other classes of them . . . Every such law, therefore, imposes a real tax upon the whole country, not in favour of that particular class of workmen who were injured by our neighbours' prohibition, but of some other class."

RUSSELL ROBERTS
*The Library of Economics and Liberty*
*Washington University*
*St. Louis, MO*

IRWIN M. STELZER RESPONDS: Everything Mr. Roberts says about the virtues of free trade, and the cost of erecting trade barriers, is correct, although he does err in saying that Adam Smith saw retaliation merely as a means of revenge. The reader should himself consult Smith; he will find that the great Scot saw retaliation as a means of forcing the offending protectionist to call off his trade war. But Roberts avoids the troublesome question I raise: Are there times when free trade should play second fiddle to other national objectives and policies? I think so—alas.

## MOVIES TO MUSICALS

IN HIS OTHERWISE EXCELLENT REVIEW of *The Producers* ("Mel Brooks Produces," April 30), John Podhoretz states a "rule" that "musicals derived from movies don't work," citing only two exceptions, *Carnival* and *The Lion King*.

Just off the top of my head, I can think of several other artistically and commercially successful Broadway musicals based on movies, including Bob Fosse and Neil Simon's *Sweet Charity* (based on Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*), Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* (based on Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night*), *Nine* (based on Fellini's *8-1/2*), *Shenandoah*, and *On the Twentieth Century* (both starring John Cullum, the first based on a James Stewart movie of the same name and the second based on a John Barrymore movie called simply *Twentieth Century*). This list does not include more recent, less successful productions like *Big* and *Passion*.

Finally, one could argue that *My Fair Lady* hews more closely to Anthony Asquith's 1938 film version of *Pygmalion* than it does to George Bernard Shaw's original play. All in all, that's not a bad track record for the translation of musicals from movies.

RICHARD E. SINCERE JR.
*Charlottesville, VA*

JOHN PODHORETZ RESPONDS: I am impressed with Mr. Sincere's knowledge of the American musical, but I was expressing an opinion—and in my opinion, only *The Lion King* and *Carnival* are successes on their own terms. I would add *On the Twentieth Century* (in which I once acted), but it is in fact based on a play that was also the source of the John Barrymore film.

## BRAGGING RIGHTS

THANK YOU for David Skinner's "My Left Ear," in the May 7 issue. As a teenager in 1987, I was one of probably two Republicans at a Billy Bragg concert at the Roseland in New York. The concert was held on April 15—the day of the year, even as a teen, that I most hate political philosophy that is even the slightest shade of pink. But how could I resist attending a concert by a man who named an album *Talking with the Tax Man About Poetry*?

Today I've found myself singing "The Marriage" and "You Woke Up My Neighborhood," which is considerably more pleasant than when "Help Save the Youth of America" is stuck in my head.

Several policy analysts at the Cato Institute have formed a band called "Spontaneous Order." I'm hoping to soon find myself singing about the glories of property rights, individual liberty, and free trade.

KRISTIE CONEYS KUHL
*Fairfield, CT*

• • •

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the weekly Standard

# John Walters and His Critics

Every student of American politics is familiar with the life-cycle biology of "borking," that process by which nominees for high national office are nowadays targeted for career-destroying character assassination. First there comes the insect's egg: a cartoon account, hatched by some ideological enemy, of his intended prey's mind and work. In its larval stage, this cartoon begins a worm-crawl through the news pages—reported, altogether without verification, as what "critics say." Thus endowed with the requisite credibility as a public "controversy," the slander *du jour* next forms itself into a pupa of talking points and "fact" sheets, available for cultivation by those members of Congress who do not belong to the nominating president's political party. And soon enough a giant moth of falsity has flown across the Washington sky, descended on our would-be public servant, and swallowed his reputation whole. The United States Senate declares the nominee's carcass unsuitable for government employment. And that is that.

There are people who now wish such a fate on John P. Walters, announced last Thursday as President Bush's choice to lead the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. They will not get their way—we're confident that a large, bipartisan majority of the Senate will instead enthusiastically confirm Walters to the post, for a series of excellent reasons we will come back to in a moment. But even what limited success Walters's antagonists will have achieved along the way represents a distressing commentary on the intelligence and decency of contemporary American discourse.

Consider who these people are, just for starters: a small handful of doctrinaire journalectuals, a smaller handful of misguided libertarians, an even smaller handful of professional dope smokers—and one other man, John Walters's highly self-interested immediate predecessor in the White House drug czar's office. Then consider that the mud-slinging of these ought-to-be-marginal figures has somehow won endorsement by no less than the *New York Times*. It is his opponents who reflect the "growing recognition" of mainstream drug-abuse experts, a *Times* lead editorial has lately suggested, and it is John Walters who represents the "discredited" past! This is worse than ignorance. It is an attempted borking of truly unsurpassed audacity—not so much a clever distortion of Walters's views and record as an outright upending of the truth about him. For as this magazine is unusually well-positioned to attest—many of the staff are friends of his and more than one of us are his former colleagues, too—John Walters is exactly nothing that his critics contend he is. And everything they complain he is not.

Some of them know it, too, and simply don't care. Polemicist Michael Massing, for example. Massing has been writing about federal drug policy for more than a decade, during which he has masterfully disguised a deep and stubborn bias on the subject beneath mountains of leaden prose and "research." We can spare you the trouble: Though he is careful never to say so explicitly, Massing favors a drastic relaxation of existing criminal penalties against the wholesale trafficking and retail sale of mind-altering substances. In the service of which goal, he has consistently derided any who disagree with him as insensitive to the tragedy of addiction and stingy about providing medical treatment to its victims.

John Walters happens to be someone who disagrees with Massing about the value and enforcement of our narcotics laws. So Massing is eager to portray Walters as a chest-thumping, Wild West avenger, a man "captivated by the glamour and romance" of a Peruvian-jungle drug war while contemptuous of all those lily-livered doctors and teachers here at home. For proof, Massing urges us to study Walters's previous stint at the White House drug office—as chief of staff and deputy director under William Bennett during the first Bush administration. Back then, according to Massing's hatchet-job profile of the soon-to-be czar in the May 6 *Washington Post*, Walters went so far as to hire for his "top aide" a "former Navy SEAL who loved to boast about his daring feats on secret missions."

I don't remember it that way—and here it is necessary to set aside our magazine's customary institutional voice and speak in the first person. If I'm not mistaken, and surviving documentary evidence should confirm the fact, the man John Walters hired as his top drug-office aide in 1989 was me. I rather doubt that I was given in those days to boasting about my daring feats on secret missions as a



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Navy SEAL. I doubt it because I can't recall ever being a Navy SEAL at all. Perhaps he has me confused with someone else?

And perhaps it is a lie what Massing says about my friend's adherence to the "'kingpin' theory of drug enforcement," a Justice Department strategy Walters actually never placed much faith in. Perhaps it is a lie what Massing says about Walters's responsibility for the Peruvian air force's shoot-down policy, which was not instituted, in real-world history, until the Clinton administration. Perhaps *much* of what Michael Massing says about John Walters is a lie. Especially his insinuation that Bush administration drug policy, which Walters did more than anyone to craft and implement on a day-to-day basis, consciously and deliberately neglected federal support for medical treatment of addicts. "During his time [in the drug czar's office], federal spending on treatment did increase some," Massing allows, "but not nearly enough to meet the demand."

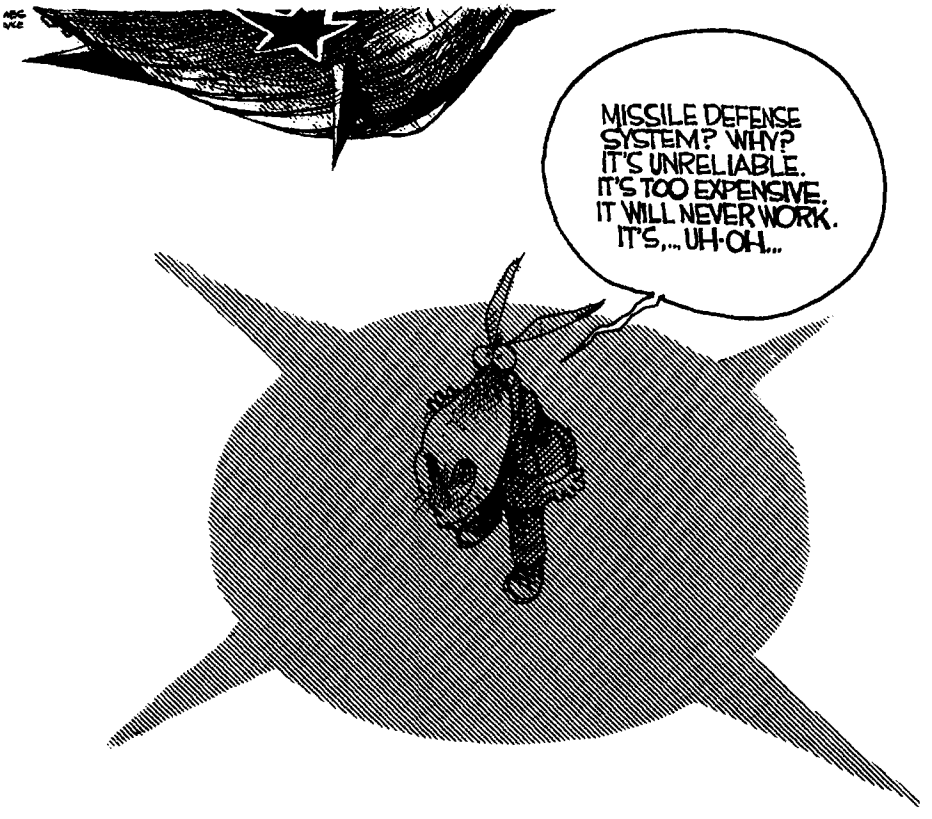
"Did increase some." That's rich. From fiscal years 1989 through 1993, the Bush administration drug budgets John Walters supervised produced the greatest expansion of federal support for treatment services *ever*. You can crunch the numbers any which way you please, in percentage terms or in simple raw dollars—it makes no difference. Given twice as much time in office, succeeding Clinton administrations barely managed to cough up half as much new drug treatment money.

It might profit the *New York Times* editorial page to look into this.

It might profit certain "free market conservatives" we know, before next they sneer at John Walters's resistance to drug legalization, to have another peek at their *Wealth of Nations*—where they will discover that the unregulated production and consumption of deadly poison isn't quite what Adam Smith had in mind.

And it might profit Keith Stroup . . . well, the executive director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws is pretty much beyond recovery, isn't he? Keith Stroup is a man in his late 50s who still believes that smoking pot can be good for you. Keith Stroup calls convicted cocaine dealers "political prisoners." Keith Stroup says it is John Walters who is—get this—"extreme" and "out of touch with the attitudes of the American public." Nobody takes Keith Stroup seriously.

Which is the situation retired general Barry McCaffrey may soon find himself in if he isn't careful. McCaffrey, of course, was federal drug czar for the final five years of the Clinton presidency. McCaffrey is also the fellow who's been most prominent these past few weeks, in newspaper interviews and on national television, expressing Michael Massing-like "worries" that John Walters just doesn't get it about drug treatment. No man who thinks militarized law enforcement is the solution should be next up for Barry McCaffrey's old job. Says Barry McCaffrey.



Michael Ramirez

Odd coming from him, don't you think, given the budget numbers we've reviewed above? On the other hand, money isn't everything; maybe there is some better lens through which we should view the general's tenure as drug czar. Maybe, on closer inspection, it really will prove to be the case that Barry McCaffrey has done more to reduce American demand for dangerous drugs—rather than just "lock people up"—than this John Walters character could hope to achieve in a million years.

Maybe, for instance, Gen. McCaffrey would welcome national attention to a little noticed Price Waterhouse Coopers study of his White House office released last June. Which study revealed that our outgoing drug czar had let



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wither his agency's drug-treatment division, never bothering to hire a permanent director, while assigning an astonishing 17 full-time staffers to the management of his media bookings and speechmaking schedule.

Or maybe Gen. McCaffrey would welcome national attention to the fact that the Justice Department is still reviewing serious allegations of billing fraud concerning the billion-dollar campaign of anti-drug television ads he designed and oversaw. Knowledge of which allegations McCaffrey falsely denied to investigators from the General Accounting Office when they first questioned him about the matter. Not to mention McCaffrey's initial (also false) denial that one of the ad campaign's outside publicity consultants—on a $10 million per annum taxpayer retainer—had given him some on-the-house damage-control assistance when the *New Yorker* published an incendiary story about the general's battlefield conduct during the Persian Gulf War.

Or maybe, having already created plenty of mess for John Walters to clean up, it would be better for Barry McCaffrey simply to leave the stage.

His criticism of Walters is highly unusual, after all. Federal drug policy has traditionally been a thoroughly bipartisan and relatively uncontentious enterprise. And it will most probably remain so, throughout and beyond a pending Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Walters's nomination. If Michael Massing imagines that panel's Democrats to be his natural allies, he misjudges and insults them. Joseph Biden, for example, has worked as long on drug policy, and understands the issue as comprehensively, as any other current senator. He knows John Walters very well. When Biden was Democratic chairman of the Judiciary Committee during the first Bush administration, the two men worked together closely and cooperatively and productively. And they agreed about things vastly more often than not.

Every other Democrat now serving on the Judiciary Committee also serves on a Senate appropriations panel with major responsibility for some aspect of federal drug policy. These men and women, too, have carefully considered views on the subject. When they meet John Walters, they will find that he shares those views in every important respect. And we expect they will approve him.

As will the Senate as a whole. John Walters is the best qualified man in America for the job.

*—David Tell, for the Editors*



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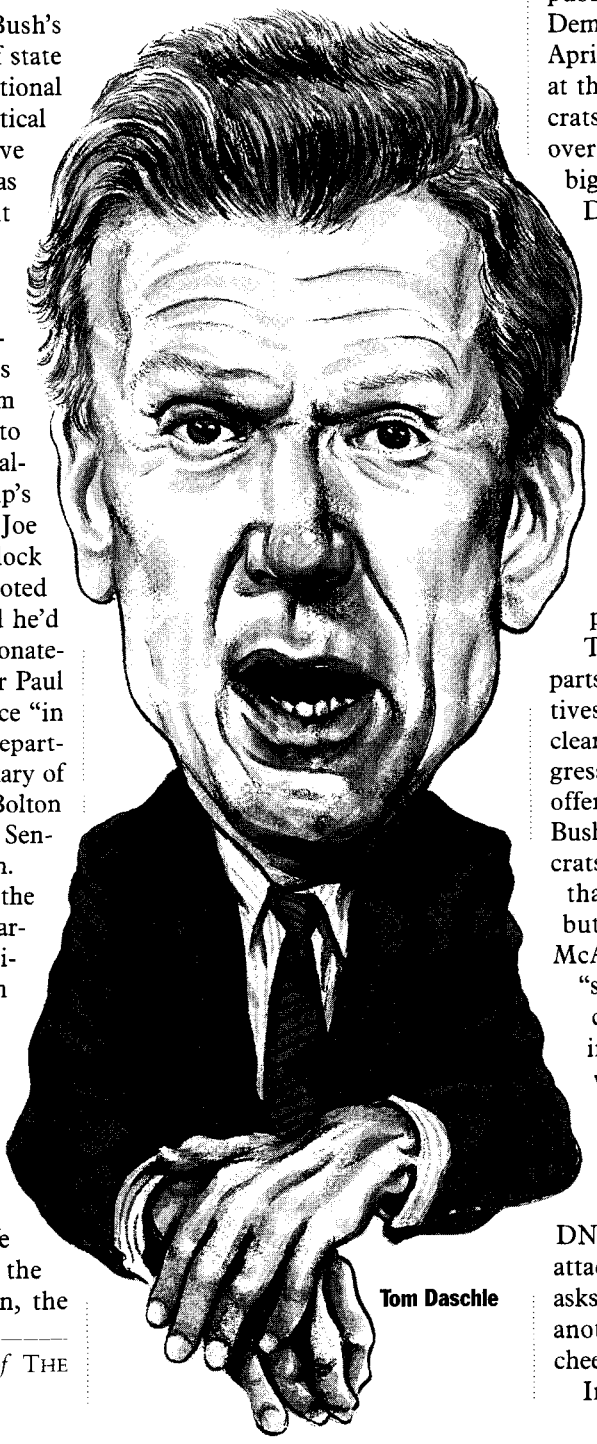
# The Party of Obstruction

## Can the Democrats do to Bush in 2002 what the GOP did to Clinton in 1994? BY FRED BARNES

JOHN BOLTON, President Bush's choice for undersecretary of state for arms control and international security affairs, is hardly a political lightning rod. His conservative views match Bush's own. He was confirmed without incident three times to second-echelon posts in the Reagan and Bush senior administrations. But Senate Democrats reacted differently to his nomination this time. Minority leader Tom Daschle was one of the first to vote against him on May 8, signaling the Democratic leadership's strong opposition. Senator Joe Biden promised not to block Bolton, then flip-flopped and voted no. Senator Byron Dorgan said he'd never met Bolton but was passionately opposed nonetheless. Senator Paul Wellstone said Bolton's presence "in the inner circle of the State Department" might "undercut" Secretary of State Colin Powell. In the end, Bolton was confirmed, but 43 of the 50 Senate Democrats voted against him.

Bolton was the first target of the new Democratic strategy of near-total war against Bush, his policies, and his nominees. The aim is to replicate what Republicans did to the Clinton administration in 1993 and 1994 (or at least what Democrats think the GOP did). And the goal is to capture the House and Senate in 2002, just as Republicans won Congress in 1994. "We need to learn the lessons of the Republicans," says Jim Jordan, the executive director of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. "We're better off fighting a guerrilla war and having no territory to defend."



Tom Daschle

Illustration by Drew Friedman

Democrats recognize they can't generate toward Bush the intense dislike that Republicans had for President Clinton. But at a minimum they want to prevent Bush from "changing the tone" in Washington in a way the public finds soothing. Only 50 Democrats in Congress showed up on April 30 for a first-100-days luncheon at the White House. Instead, Democrats want to create fierce conflict over big issues, especially over the biggest issue of all, Social Security. Democrats concede they'd lost this issue after years of accusing Republicans of trying to cut benefits. Their scare tactics lacked credibility. But with Bush's plan to partially privatize Social Security, "the scare is back," a Democratic strategist says. "I think we're going to beat Bush to death with it." In short, if all goes well for Democrats, Social Security will play the role that the Clinton health care plan did in 1994.

The Democratic strategy has five parts: relentlessly oppose Bush initiatives, put Bush on defense, offer a clear Democratic message, keep congressional Democrats united, and offer no Democratic alternatives to Bush programs. Congressional Democrats are not making the argument that Bush stole the 2000 election, but their national chairman, Terry McAuliffe, is. He insists Bush was "selected, not elected." At a Democratic National Committee "hearing" in Riviera Beach, Florida, last week, McAuliffe declared: "We won that election, and they stole that election. President Bush tells us to get over it. Well, we're not going to get over it." The DNC has also broadcast a TV ad attacking Bush in which one child asks for more arsenic in her water and another requests salmonella on his cheeseburger.

In criticizing Bush on everything

*Fred Barnes is executive editor of* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



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but the election, Democrats are almost as strident as McAuliffe. Daschle, normally mild-mannered, has become a shrill attack dog. Last week, he said the Bush-backed budget that passed the Senate is "a nuclear bomb for fiscal discipline in this country." It was approved, he added, only through a "major degradation of the rule of law." Daschle labeled Bush's missile defense plan "the single dumbest thing I've heard so far from this administration." Bush's Social Security commission is the equivalent of appointing oil company executives to a commission on opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to energy exploration.

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Democrats have begun to sound like reactionary liberals, noisily opposed to virtually any change in existing programs. Being on the wrong side of the reform versus reaction fight could backfire politically, but Democrats are unconcerned. On Bush's proposed reform of Social Security, Daschle said a 35-year-old would be "guaranteed to lose 20 percent of your Social Security benefits by the time you retire." He says this despite Bush's pledge not to cut any benefits. Daschle's alternative: "Don't mess with Social Security, don't destroy it. It's worked for us all these years. It's guaranteed to work in the future." Bush hasn't offered a Medicare reform plan yet, but he's indicated he favors free-market reform. Democrats are vehemently against this, too. Their solution is simply to add more funding. On education, it's the same. To go along with Bush's education bill, Democrats insisted on more spending and fewer reforms.

Democratic opposition to missile defense is based on adherence to the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty of 1972, though its architect, Henry Kissinger, has declared it obsolete. It was designed to maintain a peaceful standoff between the large nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union. Now, the Soviet Union is defunct and other nations—including terrorist states that might not be deterred by the threat of retaliation—are seeking to develop nuclear weapons. Still, the ABM treaty, which sharply limits deployment of anti-missile systems, must be preserved, Democrats say. Listen to Senator John Kerry on *Meet the Press* on May 6: "It would be dangerous for the world, dangerous for America, make us less secure, to unilaterally abrogate that treaty and simply move on to put out some uninterpretable defense system."

Crucial to the success of the Democratic strategy is lockstep unity. If even a few Democrats are peeled away to support Bush—as five were on last week's Senate budget vote—the strategy is doomed. Thus, Democrats are under strong pressure not to defect. The pressure was so great on Zell Miller, the most pro-Bush Democrat in the Senate, that he threatened to switch parties. When the pressure eased, he announced he'd remain a Democrat. Miller and four other Democrats voted for the Bush budget. One was John Breaux, who's met privately with Bush several times. Republican senators say Breaux has been aggressively leaned on by Democratic leaders to cut his ties to Bush.

Where unity appears most secure is among the seven Senate Democrats regarded as potential presidential contenders in 2004: Daschle, Kerry, Evan Bayh, Hillary Clinton, Chris Dodd, John Edwards, and Joe Lieberman. They have stuck closely to the liberal, anti-Bush orthodoxy that is attractive to Democratic interest groups. Lieberman, though friendly to Bush's faith-based initiative, has not returned to the moderate fold. When he outlined his economic views in a speech in March at George Washington University, he sounded like Teddy Kennedy. Lieberman did vote to confirm John Bolton, however, as did Bayh. Earlier, all seven voted against John Ashcroft for attorney general.

Now comes the real test. Senate Democrats have adopted a new standard for considering judicial selections. In the past, Republican nominees were opposed only if they had scandal problems or could be characterized as extremists. But Democrats are so determined to prevent Bush from stocking the federal judiciary with conservatives that they now intend to oppose at least some Bush picks solely on ideological grounds. Bush tried to assuage Democrats by dropping 3 conservatives from his initial batch of 11 nominees and including 2 black Democrats, a Hispanic, and 3 women. Will Democrats accept the entire diverse group, including the conservatives? The political strategy they're pursuing suggests the answer is no. ♦



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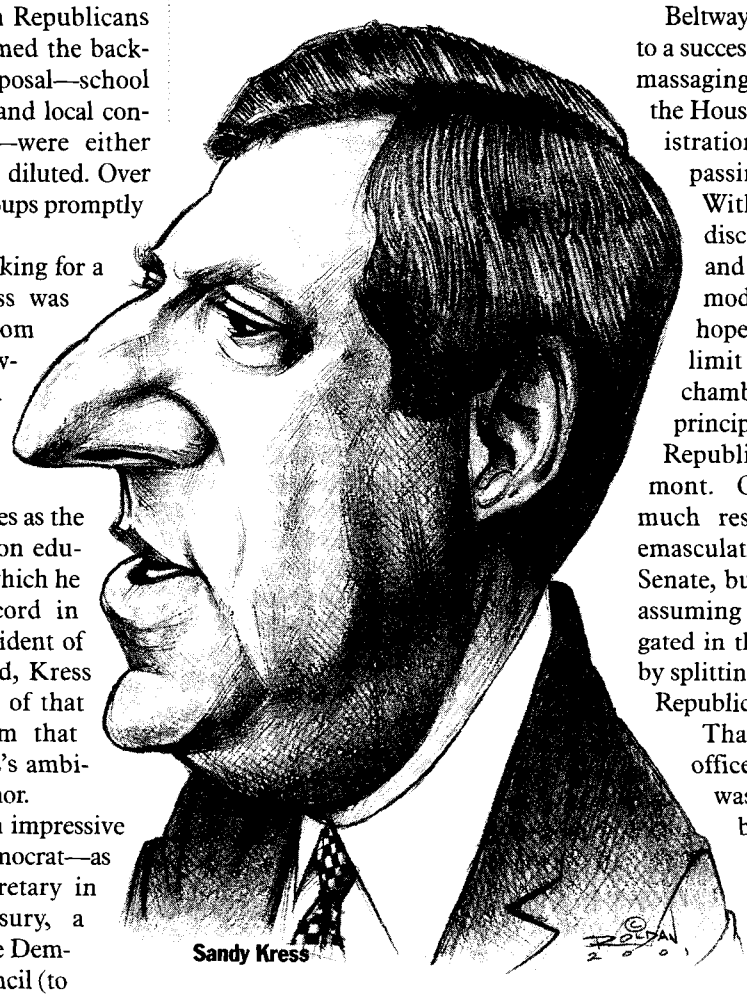
# The Education of Hill Conservatives

## Bush's bipartisan education strategy leaves some Republicans behind. BY SAM DEALEY

When House Education and Workforce chairman John Boehner unveiled the president's retooled education bill two weeks ago, conservatives howled. Key provisions candidate Bush had stumped for and which Republicans were led to believe formed the backbone of his reform proposal—school vouchers, for example, and local control of federal funds—were either missing or substantially diluted. Over 50 national and state groups promptly withdrew their support.

For conservatives looking for a scapegoat, Sandy Kress was their man. On loan from the Austin office of powerhouse lobbying firm Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld for the administration's first four months, Kress serves as the president's point man on education. It's an issue on which he has an impressive record in Texas. As a former president of the Dallas school board, Kress was the chief architect of that city's education reform that caught the eye of Texas's ambitious Republican governor.

But Kress also has an impressive record as a lifelong Democrat—as a deputy assistant secretary in Jimmy Carter's Treasury, a founding member of the Democratic Leadership Council (to which he still belongs), and the pro-choice chairman of the Dallas County Democratic Committee. He launched one congressional campaign for retiring representative John Bryant's seat in 1990—aborted when the Texas Democrat decided to stand for reelection after all—and considered at least one other. Perhaps most damning of all, senator Ted Kennedy seems to like him.



Sandy Kress

Illustration by Ismael Roldan

Given those credentials, it's no wonder conservatives fumed in private that Kress had sabotaged the president's education plan. "He's not a conservative," says one activist. "He doesn't see things from the same viewpoint that we do. So right off the bat you have to wonder about whose interests he had in mind." Says an Education Committee Republican who voted against the bill: "He was real polite, and he's a real nice guy, but I guess you never really thought he was listening."

There's no evidence, however, that Kress has done anything but his boss's bidding. "To the extent that people feel uncomfortable about someone who is not their own being the lead person—yeah, I think that's a legitimate concern," says a House leadership aide. "But he's not the one person driving the machine." In fact there's a whole team of them at the White House.

Beltway wisdom holds that the key to a successful Bush presidency will be massaging the 50-50 Senate, but it's the House that is perhaps the administration's most powerful ally in passing meaningful legislation. With the even split, a highly disciplined Democratic caucus, and a handful of maverick GOP moderates, the best that can be hoped for from the Senate is to limit the damage—witness that chamber's education bill, crafted principally by Kennedy and liberal Republican James Jeffords of Vermont. Conservatives had pretty much resigned themselves to the emasculation of Bush's plan by the Senate, but largely bit their tongues, assuming these losses could be mitigated in the House-Senate conference by splitting the difference with a more Republican House bill.

That didn't happen. Boehner's office insists his goal all along was to pass a bipartisan bill, but in a leadership meeting just days before the unveiling, he told House colleagues he had an all-Republican version that could narrowly pass. According to education and leadership sources, the White House insisted that Boehner go with the bipartisan bill. "The president said he wanted a bipartisan bill," says Michael Schwartz of Concerned Women for America. "That means we'll have a

*Sam Dealey is a writer in Washington, D.C.*



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partisan bill"—with the support of Democrats and "a rump of renegade Republicans." Indeed, when the measure sailed out of Boehner's committee 41-7 last Wednesday, six of the seven no votes came from conservative Republicans.

Those no votes came less than two hours after a meeting in the Capitol in which senior White House officials and House GOP leaders sought to persuade eight conservative committee members to vote for the bill. The officials, who included White House chief of staff Andrew Card via phone and top congressional lobbyist Nick Calio, managed to sway just two.

The unhappiness of House Republicans goes beyond the six defecting committee members. The White House is trying to undo some of the damage, saying the administration will support amendments made by conservative members on the House floor as long as they will vote for final passage. But leadership aides are not sanguine, calling the overall strategy of last-minute Republicanizing "naive" and "unsophisticated." As one education committee staffer says, "If two moderate bills go to conference, the end result is guaranteed more spending."

Despite their unhappiness, Capitol Hill conservatives would still rather complain about Kress than about his bosses in the White House, including the president. Perhaps what conservatives should really be worried about, though, is that administration aides genuinely seem to believe that the bill is good policy, and not just a poll-driven public relations triumph. "This is as solid as an education bill can get," says one administration official. Leading conservative education expert Chester E. Finn Jr. scoffs: "I'm disappointed, because I thought this time we'd get the dramatic overhaul that these programs have needed for decades. Instead it's mostly just incremental, tweaking-type amendments."

Still, conservatives are mostly in a forgiving mood towards the White House. "Maybe it's a lesson learned," says one. It's a lesson, all right. But for whom? ♦

# The End of Education Reform

## Without parental choice, accountability is a sham.

**BY MICHAEL S. GREVE**

THE EDUCATION "REFORM" about to emerge from Congress is a perfect disaster. Conservatives such as William Bennett and Chester E. Finn Jr., who initially supported and in many ways shaped the administration's position on education, now argue that the proposals have been so badly distorted and diluted by Congress that the administration should insist on improvement.

That sensible advice, alas, comes too late, since the administration signaled weeks ago that it would sign absolutely any education bill. While a handful of Republican legislators continue to argue for an education tax credit that would redeem an otherwise abominable bill, the White House has shown no interest in that proposal. The chance for meaningful federal education reform has come and gone, not to return for another decade or so. All that can be done now is to learn how to prevent similar policy wrecks in the future.

The original Bush agenda for education reform rested on school choice, in the form of a $1,500 voucher for parents of children trapped in failing schools; increased flexibility for states and local school districts, through the consolidation of a panoply of highly specific federal programs into a few block grants; and "accountability," through national and state tests. From these building blocks, one can fashion a sensible reform strategy. The key is allowing federal dollars, whether through vouchers or tax credits, to bypass what Bennett as secretary of education famously termed the "blob"—the cartel of education bureaucrats and officials (at all levels of government) that impedes any serious reform effort. Give the blob sufficient flexibility to demonstrate its incompetence; administer tests to prove the point; and, at the end of the day, let parents remove their children from failed school systems.

This strategy depends on the ability of children to exit failed schools. Unfortunately, before Congress had even begun to debate education reform, the White House surrendered the choice provisions—as if they were just some bauble to curry favor with the religious right and a handful of libertarians, rather than the only means of introducing a measure of accountability to public education.

Instead of pulling their support then and there, conservative advocates and legislators patiently participated in earnest discussions over national tests and block grants. These nostrums—the "centrist" favorites of senator Joseph Lieberman and the Progressive Policy Institute—mistakenly assume that one can improve public education by making schools accountable to the national government, rather than to consumers. But "accountability" without the threat of exit is a mirage. The demise of private choice thus marked the transition from serious, if piecemeal, education reform into Ted Kennedy's feel-good fantasy land.

Testing requirements hold promise for improving school performance if failing schools face the threat of losing customers (and money). Remove

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that threat, and the tests will have the opposite effect. Far from empowering parents, the mandatory disclosure of test results will provide administrators with useful new talking points—for instance, they can blame poor results on a "lack of federal funding." No parent can credibly contest that explanation. Without the lure of a partial voucher to exit the system, parents will instead have every incentive to join their local school administrators in demanding more spending. School districts thus have an incentive to perform just a shade above "failing" (a designation that might trigger monetary sanctions, however modest); doing any better would mean a missed opportunity to plead for still more federal support.

Similar perverse results will flow from the block grants—the attempt to replace federal micro-management with state and local flexibility while still holding those agencies accountable for "results." What control Congress cedes in the name of flexibility, it will take back in the name of accountability. Federal grant restrictions, after all, exist not because congressmen believe that the *federales* are terrific managers. No, the point is to ensure that the funds reach the intended interest groups—mandates for teacher hiring (for the benefit of the NEA), school construction grants (for construction unions), remedial and tutoring programs (for social service workers), and so on. Block grants will not bypass these constituencies. Indeed, the administration's vow to sign whatever education "reform" Congress might produce has enabled the education cartel to recapture a big portion of the added funds in this very round of legislation; the pending bills contain a raft of highly specific, constituency-serving provisions. Even tutoring and transportation services for children in failed schools, the sorry remains of the original choice proposals, will be provided chiefly by the Democrats' education-consultant clientele. The remaining block-granted funds, the blob will recategorize and claw back in years to come.

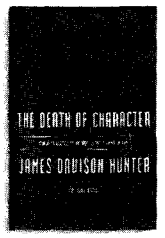
Two years hence, in the face of yet another failed education reform, the debate over "flexibility" and "accountability" will start anew, but at a higher level of aggregate spending. The blob will again parade its wretched underage hostages in front of the television cameras. Having deprived them of even a modest means of escape, we will—do what? Defund the schools that failed them? Not likely. We will instead cut the education cartel another big check. Reward-for-failure has been the ineluctable logic and effect of every school "reform" effort over the past three decades.

Some Republican strategists insist that education "reform," no matter how flawed, is essential to maintaining the GOP's viability among suburban voters. Since the choice option is unpopular with liberals and moderates in Congress, the White House had to throw it overboard, get the education issue out of the way, and move on to truly important things. But that is pure spin. If education legislation was meant to be no more than a sop to soccer moms, a dozen Clintonesque micro-grants for phonics education, "civic values" teaching, school uniforms, and demonstration projects here and there, announced with great fanfare and soothing talk over a two-year period, would have been cheaper and more effective. Unlike the law about to be enacted, such a program would not have signaled the GOP's endorsement of Ted Kennedy's education agenda.

In fact, education was George W. Bush's calling card, not an inconvenient hurdle to get past. That being so, the administration should have fought for the choice plank. If Kennedy, Jeffords & Co. squawk over the pettiness of a $1,500 scholarship grant, double the money. If they squawk over "destroying public education," double the money again. Keep doing so until the voters pay attention and the blob cries uncle. We will end up spending the money in any event—why not spend it on students instead of teachers' unions?

The administration's mishandling of the education bill raises the disturbing prospect of repeat performances on any poll-tested issue, from Social Security to health care, where serious, worthwhile components of reform threaten the Democratic party's clientele and infrastructure. The Left will paint those components, like school choice, as insurmountable obstacles to "bipartisanship." An administration tempted by that siren song may surrender precisely the handful of reforms that should be non-negotiable.

Conservatives were understandably reluctant to trigger a public spat over education with a newly installed administration that had shown them a fair measure of good will. In retrospect, however, their failure to offer reasoned criticism and to insist on choice when their voice might still have made a difference was a mistake. That is the true lesson of education reform. ♦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# Keep the Osprey Flying

New planes are never perfect. **BY CHRISTIAN LOWE**

IT NEVER FAILS. Once several high-profile, fatal crashes of a new airplane grab the attention of the mainstream media, questions emerge about whether the effort is worth the risk. Doubts are raised about continuing the program, and a search for blame begins.

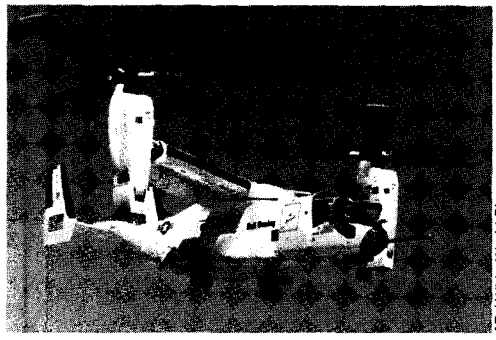
That's what's happened to the Navy's new transport plane, the V-22 Osprey. Two crashes in the past year have killed 23 Marines—including the plane's best and most experienced pilot. The latest crash, on December 11, 2000, came right around the time the Osprey's primary customer, the Marine Corps, was to have finalized the decision to purchase the innovative plane.

The crash prompted the grounding of the aircraft, the postponement of the final decision to buy, and an investigation by a panel of outside aerospace experts named by the Pentagon to examine the program from top to bottom and advise the defense secretary on whether to proceed.

And it got worse. In January, *60 Minutes* broadcast a damning exposé of a possible coverup by program officials and the commander of the new Osprey squadron, Lt. Col. Fred Leberman. The *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, CNN, and all the other networks picked up the story and cast a cynical eye upon the Osprey. By now, hearings, news conferences, investigations, and headlines have the Marine Corps scrambling to keep the program alive.

The Marines want to buy 360 Ospreys for $38 billion. What they value about the plane is that it can fly faster, farther, and longer than the choppers now flown by the Marines. The CH-46 Sea Knight, the grunts' primary transport into battle, is 30 years old. Most of the grizzled generals in the upper echelons either flew this helo in Vietnam or ran off its ramps into the jungles. It's high time their men had a new ride into battle.

Not only that, but President Bush might have had the Osprey in mind when he said that our military needs to "skip a generation" of weaponry. The V-22 is revolutionary. The only aircraft of its type, it has two huge propellers, one at each end of the wing. It can fly like a normal airplane with the props tilted forward. In this mode, it reaches a top speed of 275 mph. Once in the battle zone, the pilot can tilt back the props and land the plane vertically like a helicopter.



AP / Wide World Photos

A Marine pilot who flies the AH-1 Cobra attack helo, one of the fastest choppers in the military, said he was stunned at how fast the Osprey moves. He said when his Cobra was flying 150 mph, the Osprey streaked by him so fast it looked as if its wings were bent back. The helicopter that the Osprey is intended to replace flies fully loaded at 100 mph. In combat, speed and agility are key to survival.

Furthermore, achieving this new generation of flight is not as technologically daunting as critics, including some in the media, claim. Most of the criticism stems from a general ambivalence toward envelope-pushing military test programs in peacetime. During the Cold War, when the threat was plain, there was a much greater sense of urgency. The military equipment being developed by the services had to be the most sophisticated possible, and the public was willing to accept the risks inherent in bringing cutting-edge ideas to fruition.

Many experienced defense engineers say the public today is much less willing to hear about crashes. This forces testers to be cautious. It leaves them reluctant to take risks that could reveal problems with an aircraft early.

One of the panelists investigating the Osprey program told lawmakers in testimony on May 1 that the purpose of testing in the old days was to break something intentionally. That way engineers saw where a system might fail, and they could come up with fixes before a plane reached the field.

But not today. When a plane crashes and kills a pilot and crew, as did the Osprey that crashed in Arizona on April 8, 2000, killing 19 soldiers, the public's doubts come to the fore. Is this aircraft safe? Does the military really need a plane that just killed 19 people? Why not use helicopters already proven through years of use?

What the public and media don't take into account is the nature and history of flight testing itself. It is extremely unusual for everything to go according to plan during the testing of a new system. It would be a miracle for a new plane not to crash once during development. Test pilots know this and accept the risks, as do designers, engineers, and the military as a whole. But not the public.

We all saw the stunning success of the F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter over the skies of Iraq in 1991. The stealth jets were the first wave of the air war, targeting command and con-

*Christian Lowe covers aviation for* Defense Week.



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trol buildings in Baghdad. The jets slipped past one of the most sophisticated air defense networks in the world using revolutionary technology that allowed them to remain nearly invisible to searching radars.

But few realized that the F-117 program had suffered three crashes during its development. It had suffered three more after it was declared operational. The public now takes for granted that the stealth plane can bomb heavily defended targets with near impunity. But the truth is the plane derives its stealth largely from its diamond shape, which deflects radar energy. Because this shape is inherently unstable, the jet is mostly flown by a computer. Combine that with the fact that the jet operates only at night, and you've got what amounts to a risky flight test program.

Unlike the Osprey, however, the F-117 was a top secret "black" program, hidden from the prying eyes of skeptics, and thus never suffered the glare that has accompanied the testing of the V-22. One wonders whether stealth technology would ever have matured if the three F-117 crashes had brought the program under close scrutiny—or whether publicity would have cost the United States one of its most effective weapons.

Like stealth technology, the tilt-rotor will go forward. The concept has been tested for many years by both NASA and the Defense Department. The Osprey has been flying for nearly 10 years and has crashed four times. Two of the crashes occurred during development and involved aircraft that were not yet fully operational. Now, to put it simply, the aircraft works, and the Marines believe it will save lives. True, some aspects of operating and maintaining it still need to be improved, but that comes with the program's maturity.

No doubt the Marine Corps could have been more straightforward about the risks associated with new advanced aircraft. The brass should have made clear to the public and the press that the Osprey program might experience bumps and even crashes.

But to abandon the Osprey at this stage, or to delay it so long that it became highly vulnerable to a cut, would be a disaster for the Marine Corps and a serious blow to American interests. We are the country of innovation, founded in a spirit that welcomed risk. The Osprey ushers in a whole new way of fighting wars. So much so that its introduction into service will prove to the public—and to the troops whose lives depend on it—that we were willing to stick out the hard times to get the best weapon our money and know-how could buy. ♦

# Games Countries Play

## Clarity trumps ambiguity. BY JAMES D. MILLER

IN OUR EPIC GAME WITH CHINA, the United States has just changed strategies. Our commitment to Taiwan's defense used to be based on strategic ambiguity. Recently, however, President Bush announced that the United States will do whatever it takes to defend Taiwan.

An analysis of the game we play with China shows the wisdom of clear commitment and the folly of combining ambiguity with deterrence. Consider a simplified three-round version of this game:

ROUND ONE: The United States announces what it will do if China attacks Taiwan.

ROUND TWO: China either attacks Taiwan or does nothing.

ROUND THREE: If China attacks, the United States either defends Taiwan or does nothing.

It would be extraordinarily stupid of the United States to announce a weak level of commitment to Taiwan in round one, but then come through with a strong response in round three, since this round-one behavior would encourage China to subjugate Taiwan. It would make war likely. This strategy would be the equivalent of telling your child that there is a fair chance you won't punish her if she breaks curfew while secretly planning on grounding her for life if she does. Unless you welcome conflict with your daughter, you should unambiguously state the punishments she would receive for rule violations.

If the United States actually is prepared to defend Taiwan in round three, then the best way to avoid war is to tell this to the Chinese in round one. Of course, an unambiguous American promise to defend Taiwan might hurt the feelings of China's Communist elite. Couldn't we deter China by merely hinting that we would probably come to Taiwan's aid if its de facto sovereignty were threatened?

Consider an analogous game. Pretend a mugger knows that I am either macho or wimpy. If I am macho and get mugged, then I will fight back, while if I'm wimpy and get mugged, I will submit. To deter the mugger, I should obviously act macho. What makes things interesting is that the mugger should realize this. He should know that if I were really macho, I would benefit by broadcasting it. It would be silly of me to act less macho than I really am. Thus, if I behave ambiguously, a rational mugger should conclude that I'm a wimp. In this and many other games, it is therefore impossible to signal ambiguity, for ambiguity signals weakness.

Before attacking me, a smart mugger will test whether I am macho or

*James D. Miller is an assistant professor of economics at Smith College.*



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wimpy. He might harass me to see how I act. If I respond meekly, he will know I am safe to rob. The United States should deduce that China is continually evaluating our actions looking for signs of strength or wimpiness.

China probably judges our commitment to the defense of Taiwan the way a beautiful woman judges a man after a date. Men desperately try to impress beautiful women on first dates. Men pretend to be far nicer than they really are. Unfortunately for men, women take this into account and assume, for example, that men are not as kind as they initially appear. On a first date, therefore, for a man to convince a beautiful woman that he has at least average virtues, he must behave like a saint.

China knows that we have a massive incentive to try to deter it from attacking Taiwan. China's leaders should even realize that it would be in our interest to lie and exaggerate our strategic commitment to Taiwan. They should therefore take any level of commitment we announce as the upper limit to our willingness to defend Taiwan.

Thus, to convince China that we are even moderately serious about protecting Taiwan, we must make a definitive, not an ambiguous, public commitment. If we wouldn't mind Taiwan's falling under Chinese control, then there is nothing wrong with an American policy of strategic ambiguity. Those who wish to see Taiwan free, however, should not imagine that a policy of strategic ambiguity is a cheap way for America to deter China.

The games we play with China are like the traffic games cars play. Drivers rely on very clear rules at traffic lights. It would be disastrous if these rules were made ambiguous. Even two drivers who desperately wanted to avoid a collision would still crash if both thought they had the right of way. Similarly, mixed signals from Washington about Taiwan could lead to an accidental war, with the Chinese believing that if they invaded, we would concede the right of way. ♦

# Europe vs. Human Rights

## Why the United States got thrown off the U.N. Human Rights Commission. BY NINA SHEA

AMERICANS WERE SHOCKED when our European allies took the lead in ousting us from the United Nations Human Rights Commission early this month. Having served as a member of the U.S. delegation at the recently concluded annual session of the commission, I was less surprised. Contrary to reports in the media, the ouster was not a reaction to American "unilateralism" on issues such as missile defense and global warming. Rather, the Europeans' action reflects the abandonment of their historical commitment to human rights.

Whereas in the past, the Western European delegations were in the forefront of the commission's work, highlighting injustices in South Africa, East Timor, and Bosnia, they now resort to euphemisms and half-truths. The United States stands virtually alone in striving to focus world attention on actual violations of human rights. Repeatedly at the commission, the United States has had to break with the European Union in order to vote its conscience on issues like slavery in Sudan, religious persecution in China, and political repression in Cuba. The United States often stands alone, too, in opposing blatantly political condemnations of Israel. The loss of its seat on the commission is meant to punish the United States for marching out of step.

For the fact is, the United States is deeply resented, not only by the despotic regimes that pack the commission—the likes of Libya, Algeria, Cuba, Syria, and Vietnam—but also by our European Union allies, who dislike being forced to vote in public on measures censuring countries with which they hope to conclude trade deals. It was the Europeans who flouted the settled practice by which one of the three "Western Group" seats on the commission is reserved for the United States. When France, Austria, and Sweden all insisted on competing for seats this year, they forced the Economic and Social Council, which oversees the commission, to resolve the matter by secret ballot. Newspaper editorials from Copenhagen to Madrid are expressing satisfaction with the American ouster, sneering that go-it-alone U.S. behavior in international forums represents "boorish" isolationism. A European ambassador confidently told me that in a few years there will be no more "finger-pointing" on the Human Rights Commission.

If the United States is to win back its seat in 2002 and prove him wrong, it will need to develop a strategy for reversing four trends that are hastening the commission's decline into irrelevancy.

* First, a new dominant culture requires that the commission pass its resolution by consensus. The Europeans favor this, as do states with poor records on human rights. Consensus politics means that Sudan, say, gets to help draft the resolution censuring itself. The Khartoum government, which Secretary of State Colin Powell recently called "the biggest single abuser of human rights on Earth," thus was able to have removed from the latest resolution all mention of slavery—even though the commission's rapporteurs have documented the involvement of Khar-

*Nina Shea is director of the Center for Religious Freedom at Freedom House. The views expressed here are her own.*



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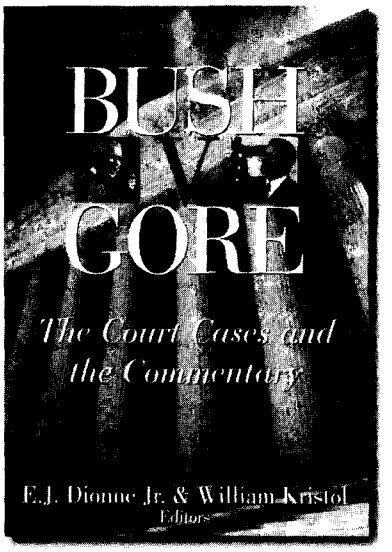
toum's militias in the practice of slavery in seven consecutive annual reports. The European Union-sponsored resolution on Sudan was so weak that the United States was forced to abstain and make a statement of protest.

* Second, the commission—like many a U.N. forum—frowns on the practice of naming violators of human rights in open debate. Under an unwritten understanding supported by the EU, the proceedings follow a 19-point "thematic" agenda, and under only one of these themes is it deemed permissible to mention countries by name. (The lone exception: Israel may be criticized at any time. During the recent six-week session, the commission adopted five resolutions censuring Israel, over U.S. objections.)

The United States refuses to go along with this. Thus, during the discussion of "human rights defenders," American delegates mentioned case after case of particular defense lawyers, journalists, clergy, and other human rights activists in specified countries who have been imprisoned or murdered for their work. In contrast, speaking for the EU, the Swedish ambassador addressed the issue in platitudes and generalities. The same pattern held whether the subject under discussion was persecuted religious believers, vulnerable groups, or those imprisoned for exercising the international right to free expression. At most, EU delegates were willing to cite countries for failing to cooperate with a commission rapporteur.

The European Union says it prefers "cooperation" to public pressure. French diplomats point to China, explaining that civilized dialogue coaxed China to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In making this argument, the French ignore China's recent labor camp detentions of Catholic bishops and thousands of Falun Gong practitioners, its destruction of a thousand churches just before Christmas, and its revival of the practice of confining dissidents in


# No One Said It Would Be Pretty




## Bush v. Gore

*The Court Cases and the Commentary*

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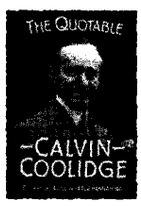


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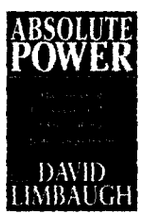


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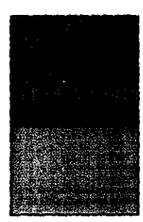

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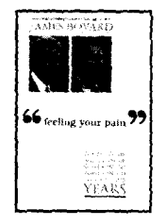


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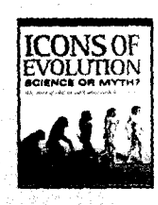


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psychiatric institutions. A German diplomat recently named special rapporteur for Sudan similarly cited the commission's success at gaining that country's cooperation in establishing—with international funding—a committee to eradicate slavery. But of the tens of thousands of people thought to be enslaved in Sudan, this committee has rescued only 353, in a single highly publicized event shortly after its establishment two years ago. Slaves, meanwhile, continue to be captured in government-sponsored raids. Clearly, cooperation is a fiction invented to protect Europe's honor and to shield the reputations of abusive governments.

* Third, there is Europe's China problem. China is the country that stands to gain most from the U.S. ouster—so much so that some observers believe eagerness to curry favor with this important trading partner was the Europeans' main motivation for running three candidates. Next year, with the United States out of the way, there will be no embarrassing resolution of censure that China will have to work hard to defeat. This session, the United States was the lone sponsor of the draft resolution against China, having failed to garner the European support it had through most of the 1990s.

China's open bullying and use of trade levers are well known at the commission. After Denmark introduced the resolution citing Chinese human rights abuses in 1997, China threatened to make the issue "a rock that smashes on the Danish government's head. Denmark, the bird that pokes out its head, will suffer the most." That was the last time the United States was able to secure cosponsorship of the measure. Beijing tolerates no criticism of its human rights abuses on U.N. premises. After Freedom House arranged a press conference with Chinese democracy activists during last year's session, China, with the support of Sudan and Cuba, brought proceedings against the group to bar it from participating at future sessions.

* Fourth, resolutions dealing with economic rights for groups and even governments are proliferating. These "rights" as envisioned in the resolution are unachievable, depending as they would for their implementation on wholesale transfers of wealth and technology from developed to undeveloped nations. At the 2001 session, a dozen resolutions passed, some at European initiative, on the rights to food, water, housing, HIV/AIDS drugs, education, development, and a host of other economic issues.

A "right to development" resolution, introduced by the Non-Aligned Movement (alive and well a decade after the Cold War), names among other obstacles to development "the existing intellectual property rights regime [and other] impediments to transfer of technology." Incredibly, only Japan joined the United States in opposing this resolution. All of Western Europe voted for it except the United Kingdom, which abstained. In the past, the champion of economic rights was the Soviet bloc. Then as now, the main purpose served by debating such unenforceable rights is to distract attention from governments' refusal to enforce the civil and political rights of the individual.

To reverse these four deplorable trends is a tall order; an impossible one unless the Europeans come to their senses. Eleanor Roosevelt and the other drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the first Commission on Human Rights in 1947 believed that moral suasion could be a potent force for change. Since then, Western Europe has made important contributions in advocating human rights abroad and been an essential American partner at the commission in giving a voice to the voiceless. If the European nations do not return to this tradition, the commission will have outlived its usefulness whether or not the United States recaptures a seat. ♦


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# The Myth of Alternative Energy

*The life and times of Amory Lovins, green guru*

## By William Tucker

Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler a few years back.

—*John Maynard Keynes*

As environmentalists roam up and down the country opposing every power plant in sight and insisting we can live in a world run on "renewable resources," they are almost invariably quoting Amory Lovins, an obscure genius, MacArthur fellow, and author of 27 books who now runs the Rocky Mountain Institute out of a solar-heated aerie in Snowmass, Colorado.

Lovins has been the wunderkind of the environmental movement since 1976, when he published "Energy Strategy: The Road Not Taken?" in the prestigious journal *Foreign Affairs*. In what became the most widely reprinted article in the periodical's history, Lovins made the startling proposal that America could live without both coal and nuclear energy. His subsequent best-seller, *Soft Energy Paths*, was sitting on Jimmy Carter's desk when Lovins visited the White House in 1978 to advise the president on energy.

Lovins went on to become one of the principal strategists behind California's revolutionary energy planning, begun under governor Jerry Brown. Today, Lovins readily admits that, "except perhaps for Maine," no state has been more diligent than California in putting his "soft energy path" into effect. Even as California's energy infrastructure collapses, Lovins continues to receive adoring coverage in the press. In April, *Business Week* named him one of its "Masters of Innovation," saying he has "envisioned a new kind of power grid in which homes and businesses could generate their own electricity." Lovins and his former wife Hunter were named two of nine "Heroes for the Planet" in a special Earth Day issue of *Time* in April 2000. Since January, he has been the subject of two admiring front-page stories in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Not content with reforming electricity generation, Lovins has gone on to invent the Hypercar, a lightweight, hydrogen-powered automobile that he informed *Fortune* will "end the car, oil, steel, aluminum, nuclear, coal, and electricity industries." The Hypercar has been praised in the *Economist*, *Business Week*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, and has received $500,000 in funding from BP Amoco and $1 million from Sam Wyly, the solar-minded Texas billionaire. (Lovins is seeking $250 million.)

In light of the disappointing outcome of California's energy experiment, it may not come as a surprise that Lovins is also a bit of a crackpot. Some of his ideas are sloppy or ill-thought-out. Others are on the fringes of scientific speculation. His proposal to eliminate the coal and nuclear industries through a transition to a hydrogen economy defies the laws of physics.

Still, these ideas have enormous impact. Inevitably, Lovins comes on the scene and conjures up a glorious future where the hard practical realities of the world we know have vanished. These energy utopias then become an excuse for doing nothing in the present. In March, amidst rolling blackouts, Lovins was the keynote speaker at the Silicon Valley Energy Summit, where he argued that Calpine's proposed 600-mw gas plant for San Jose is unnecessary because the Golden State will soon have an energy glut—once his latest conservation proposals are put into action.

As Vice President Cheney prepares to make his energy recommendations to the Bush administration this week, environmental critics have already raised the cry that he will rely too much on power plants and not enough on conservation and renewables. "Cheney's plan is the more-pollution solution," says Greg Wetstone of the Natural Resources Defense Council. After all, didn't Amory Lovins prove twenty years ago that large polluting power plants are unnecessary? California itself remains unconverted. Even as electrical shortages engulf the West, state

*William Tucker is the author of* Progress and Privilege: America in the Age of Environmentalism.



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officials are pushing ahead with plans to eliminate the internal combustion engine by mandating a switch to electric- or hydrogen-powered cars.

A careful look at Lovins's teachings makes it clear why things have gone so far awry in California and why—as these ideas inspire more environmental opposition to new energy development in other parts of the country—*they could get worse.*

The story begins in 1976, when the nation found itself in the throes of the energy crisis. Through midcentury, we had produced most of our electricity from coal. As concern about air pollution rose in the 1960s, however, we switched to low-sulfur oil. Much of this oil had to be imported—prompting the abandonment of oil-import quotas, which had protected the domestic industry. Just as swiftly, the Arab oil embargo of 1973 made it clear that imported oil was a volatile and unreliable resource. What to do next?

The nation was at a crossroads. Should we go back to coal, which was dirty and required disruptive strip-mining, or should we move ahead with nuclear power? The nuclear effort had received some early support from the Sierra Club, but now environmentalists had their doubts. Nuclear plants sucked up huge amounts of water, there was the potential for accidents, and radioactive wastes had to be disposed of. In addition, of course, there was the ever-present environmental anxiety that nuclear power might actually prove to be reasonably cheap and manageable, opening the door to more mass consumption, suburban sprawl, and industrial progress.

In this moment of uncertainty, Lovins electrified the environmental movement by arguing that neither coal nor nuclear was necessary. In prose worthy of a 19th-century English novel, Lovins wrote:

> There exists today a body of energy technologies that have certain specific features in common and that offer great technical, economic, and political attractions, yet for which there is no generic term. For lack of a more satisfactory term, I shall call them "soft" technologies: a textural description, intended to mean not vague, mushy, speculative, or ephemeral, but rather flexible, resilient, sustainable, and benign. . . . Recent research suggests that a largely or wholly solar economy can be constructed in the United States with straightforward soft technologies that are now demonstrated and now economic or nearly economic.

Lovins's central argument was that the generation of electricity was uneconomical and inefficient.

> The laws of physics require, broadly speaking, that a power station change three units of fuel into two units of almost useless waste heat plus one unit of electricity. . . . At least half the energy growth never reaches the consumer because it is lost in elaborate conversions in an increasingly inefficient fuel chain dominated by electrical generation.

Although Lovins's arguments often became dense and difficult to follow, his conclusions always remained the same: Stop building power plants, start conserving energy.

> Some 8 percent of all U.S. energy end use, and similarly little abroad, requires electricity for purposes other than low-temperature heating and cooling. Yet since we actually use electricity for many such low-grade purposes, it now meets 13 percent of U.S. end-use needs—and its generation consumes 29 percent of U.S. fossil fuels. . . . By applying careful technical fixes, we could reduce this 8 percent total to about 5 percent (mainly by reducing commercial overlighting), whereupon we could probably cover all those needs with present U.S. hydroelectric capacity plus the co-generation capacity available in the mid to late 1980s. Thus, an affluent industrial economy could advantageously operate with no central power stations at all!

The process would be economical all the way. Energy conservation was cheaper and faster to implement than new power plants were to construct. Buildings could be redesigned to conserve heat. Electric motors hadn't changed since the 1920s and were ripe for improvement. Lovins later coined the term "negawatts" to describe this strategy. Many industrial uses required steam. Much energy at power plants was vented as steam (think of the cooling towers on nuclear reactors). Why not match the two? Small "co-generation" plants at manufacturing sites could generate electricity while using the waste steam for industrial purposes. Much of our energy is consumed as low-grade heat (below the boiling point of water). Yet we were meeting these needs by turning water into steam in 10,000-degree nuclear reactors, using the steam to run electrical turbines, transmitting the electricity along high-voltage lines to homes, and there using it to heat water to 150 degrees. "It's like cutting butter with a chainsaw," Lovins said pithily. Appropriate and benign technologies could do the job much more efficiently.

Natural gas and even coal (burned cleanly in "fluidized beds") would serve as "transition fuels" for the co-generation era. As these smaller generators came on line, the grid itself would decentralize, becoming more flexible and robust. Even before PCs began replacing mainframes as the major source of computing power, Lovins was arguing that small, "distributed" sources of power could take the place of large nuclear or coal facilities. As the transition occurred, renewables and alternative energies could be phased into the system. Windmills, solar panels, small



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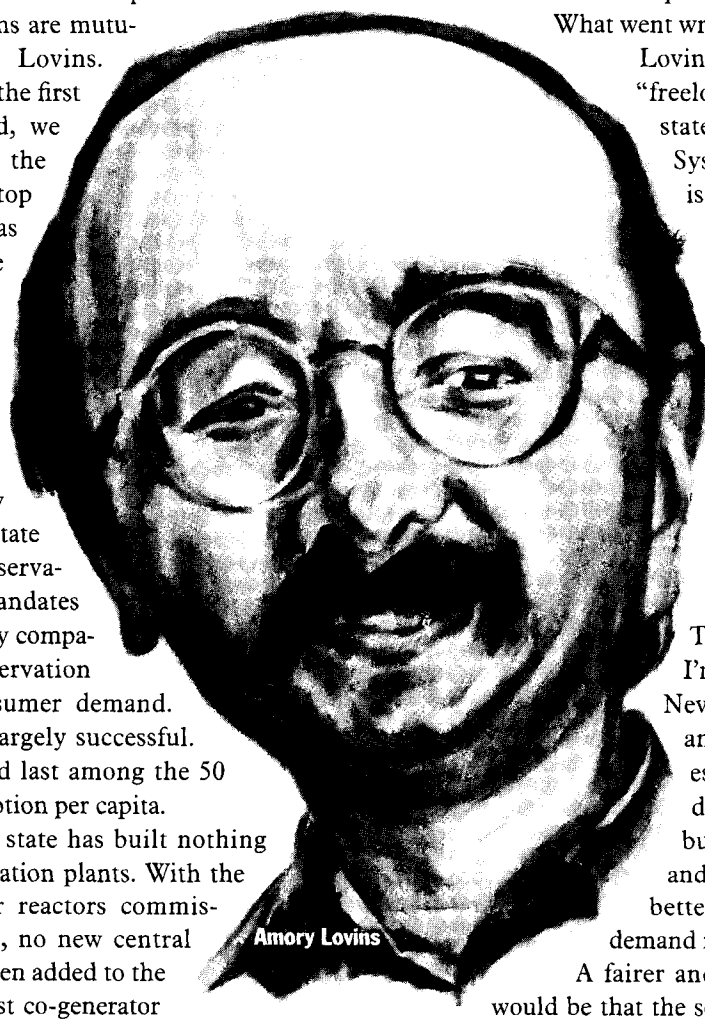
hydroelectric dams, geothermal sources, even backyard generators burning "clean" coal or natural gas could eventually produce most power. As conservation brought consumption down and alternative energies came on line, the supply and demand curves would meet. By 2025 we would be living in Energy Utopia—a world run entirely on renewable resources.

The alternative "hard path," on the other hand, promised a brittle, unreliable world of extended transmission lines and nuclear power. "It is important to recognize that the two paths are mutually exclusive," wrote Lovins. "Because commitments to the first may foreclose the second, we must soon choose one or the other—before failure to stop nuclear proliferation has foreclosed both." No state took these teachings more seriously than California.


Amory Lovins

For the last 20 years, California has done nothing but follow the soft energy path. The state has spent billions on conservation through countless mandates and incentives to the utility companies to subsidize conservation investment and cut consumer demand. These efforts have been largely successful. California now ranks dead last among the 50 states in electrical consumption per capita.

At the same time, the state has built nothing larger than small co-generation plants. With the exception of two nuclear reactors commissioned in the early 1970s, no new central generating stations have been added to the grid since 1980. The largest co-generator is the 385-mw Arco Watson plant completed in 1988. The most recent is a 158-mw plant built by Campbell Soups in 1997. By contrast, the Diablo Canyon nuclear facility contributes 2,100 mw of power.

Every other power source added to the grid has been "clean and renewable." The Golden State has over 100 windmill facilities generating 1,400 mw, 3 percent of the state's capacity. It has 43 geothermal sites generating 2,500 mw. It has the world's largest complement of solar-electric cells, generating 413 mw. It gets 30 percent of its power from hydroelectric dams (more than half of them out of state). It has 56 more renewable-energy projects generating 1,100 mw on the drawing boards—including plans to burn methane for electrical power at nearly every landfill in the state. (Each new windmill and landfill adds about 2.5 mw.) Altogether, California gets 12 percent of its electricity from small-scale renewables—more then ten times the average for the rest of the country.

Yet California has the nation's only energy crisis. The state must import 20 percent of its electricity, most of it from hydroelectric dams in Oregon and Washington and coal and nuclear plants in Arizona and Nevada. What went wrong?

Lovins argues that the problem is "freeloading" by neighboring states. "The 17-state Western System Coordinating Council is supposed to be a vehicle for the integrated resource planning that is still required by federal law, in case you didn't notice," he commented in a recent interview. "It's supposed to ensure reliable supply by making sure you have a supply-demand balance. Well, the balance was unbalanced by those other 16 states, particularly 3 or 4. The villains would be—and I'm not sure in which order—Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado. They did essentially nothing on the demand side. If Nevada had built more efficient houses and casinos, we'd have a much better balance of supply and demand in the western pool today."

A fairer and more logical explanation would be that the soft path and the theory that alternative energies could replace central generating stations proved to be woefully misbegotten.

Let us give credit where credit is due. Lovins's predictions about the potential of energy conservation have proved startlingly accurate. Today the nation's overall consumption is slightly *below* the seemingly impossible trajectory that Lovins first traced in 1976. "Energy consumed per dollar of GDP has fallen more than 35 percent since 1973," he points out.

As prophetic as he proved to be about energy conservation, however, Lovins wildly overestimated the potential of alternative sources. This should have been apparent

Illustration by Jay Lincoln



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from the beginning. Take Lovins's proposal in *Soft Energy Paths* for a U.S. transportation sector run on crop-based "gasohol." He makes his argument in a single paragraph, using the beer and wine industries as a benchmark:

> The required scale of organic conversion can be estimated. Each year the U.S. beer and wine industry, for example, microbiologically produces 5 percent as many gallons (not all alcohol, of course) as the U.S. oil industry produces gasoline. Gasoline has 1.5 to 2 times the fuel value of alcohol per gallon. Thus a conversion industry roughly ten to fourteen times the physical scale (in gallons of fluid output per year) of U.S. cellars and breweries, albeit using different processes, would produce roughly one-third of the present gasohol requirements of the United States. . . . The scale of effort required does not seem unreasonable.

Lovins's statistics are correct. But notice he doesn't bother to calculate how much organic material would have to be run through such a system. The figures are easy to estimate. Hop fields and vineyards occupy about 40 million acres of farmland. Averaging Lovins's conversion figure of 10 to 14 gives us about 480 million acres, half the cropland in the United States. But beer and wine are only about 5 percent alcohol (whereas gasohol is 100 percent alcohol). This means multiplying again by 20, which gives us 9.6 billion acres—ten times the entire cropland of the United States—to produce *one-third* of the fuel we needed for transportation in 1977.

(When confronted with these figures, Lovins argues that hops and grapes are not a good measure of gasohol's potential. "You could produce enough liquid fuels out of all the farm and forest wastes that are produced and disposed of today. That's enough to run an efficient U.S. transportation system"—meaning a system three or four times more efficient than what we have now.)

Lovins's biggest mistake was his presumption that generating electricity is inherently inefficient. First, the conversion losses have been reduced from two-thirds to one-third in the newest power plants. But second and more important, electricity itself is so versatile and fungible that it creates its own efficiencies. Lovins correctly notes that we now use 35 percent less energy per dollar of GDP than we did in 1975. But we use only 3 percent less *electricity*.

In 1975, we consumed 28 percent of our energy as electricity. Today the figure is 40 percent. Much of our improved energy efficiency has come precisely through this conversion. In 1975, 40 percent of household natural gas was wasted in pilot lights. Today we have electronic ignition, which produces enormous savings. The potential for further conservation is just coming into view as the Internet and other electronic networks disseminate timely information.

As we capitalize on electricity's greater efficiencies, alternative energies become more and more unfeasible. Electricity cannot be stored. It must be consumed as it is generated. This plays havoc with alternative energies, which are largely dependent on the weather. You couldn't possibly power California by littering the countryside with windmills or solar cells, as Greenpeace and other environmental groups now advocate. The electric current would come and go with the wind and sun. Once windmills made up more than 25 percent of the grid, random fluctuations in frequency would start damaging electric-powered equipment. Even hydropower is highly seasonal, dependent on rainfall and snowmelt. By contrast, many nuclear plants now run nearly two years without interruption. Alternative energies can never be more than a supplement to the more reliable base-load plants.

Aware of these problems, Lovins has brought forth a grand new synthesis—the hydrogen economy, utilizing "the most common element in the universe." The key breakthrough is the fuel cell, a device that uses hydrogen to produce an electric current, with 170 degree water the only by-product. Lovins's Hypercar runs on such fuel cells. Moreover, Lovins has made the Hypercar part of a larger scenario that he claims will (1) power the entire transportation sector, (2) solve our air pollution problems, and (3) "end the car, oil, steel, aluminum, nuclear, coal, and electricity industries"—all in one blow. (The auto companies themselves are experimenting with hydrogen cars. In February, BMW introduced a model that can do 140 mph.) All this becomes particularly interesting as California prepares to mandate that 10 percent of all new cars sold in the state be "non-emissions vehicles" by 2003.

There is only one problem with the Age of Hydrogen: Where do you get the hydrogen? Although hydrogen is indeed the most common element in the universe, free $H_2$ exists only in outer space. On Earth, it is all tied up in chemical compounds. The most available sources are natural gas and water. Extracting hydrogen requires energy. Thus, hydrogen, like electricity, is not a "natural resource." Like electricity, it only *carries* energy derived from other resources. Nevertheless, Lovins is undeterred. Here's what he would do.

In the natural gas scenario, methane ($CH_4$) would be combined with oxygen at the wellhead. This would produce pure hydrogen ($H_2$) and carbon dioxide ($CO_2$). The carbon dioxide, of course, is just another "greenhouse gas," but Lovins would re-inject it into the gas wells, keeping it out of the atmosphere and increasing subterranean pressure that would make more gas easier to extract. "Existing natural gas resources—roughly 200 years of supply at current rates of consumption—could



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provide a long bridge to a fully renewable energy system," he says.

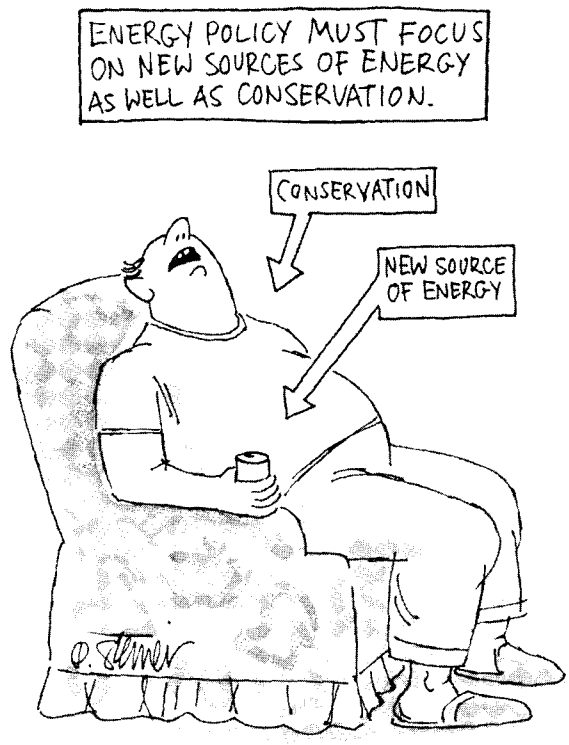
But is that much natural gas really available? After all, our domestic production has leveled off, and we import 17 percent of our gas from Canada. Lovins sees no problem. He subscribes to the theory of Cornell astronomy professor Thomas Gold that not all natural gas is necessarily biological in origin. There may be huge "astronomical" deposits at depths of five to ten miles beneath the earth's surface. "There's a heck of a lot of methane in the solar system that doesn't come from living things," says Lovins. "It is ubiquitous and abundant on Earth as well." Although Gold's theory has scattered support in the scientific community, it is by no means proven. Even if it proves true, there is no guarantee that deep deposits will be virtually unlimited.

Given an almost infinite supply of natural gas, of course, just about any energy strategy becomes practical. (Gold himself doesn't see the need for Lovins's hydrogen scenario.) But in the event those supplies do not turn up, Lovins has another scheme. This involves producing hydrogen by electrolysis—splitting water ($H_20$) using an electric current.

According to the plan, individual buildings all over the country would install "hydrogen appliances"—small electrolytic devices using "cheap off-peak power" from the "ubiquitous electrical grid" to produce hydrogen. Some of the hydrogen would be fed into the buildings' fuel cells, to supply their electricity, heat, and hot water. The remaining $H_2$ would power the Hypercars.

But that's not the end. Each of these Hypercars—equipped with its own fuel cell—would in turn become a "plug-in 20-plus-kilowatt power plant." While parked ("96 percent of the time"), they would be connected to a building's hydrogen supply and the electrical grid. Using its own fuel cell, each Hypercar would pump electricity back onto the grid. "Ultimately, plug-in Hypercars could provide 5 to 10 times as much generating capacity as all utilities own," says Lovins, "enough in principle to displace essentially all central thermal power stations at a profit." This would be "the last nail in the nuclear coffin."

Let's look carefully at what Lovins has devised here. He has invented a system that uses *electricity* to produce *hydrogen* to produce *electricity*. And by the time he's through, he thinks he'll have so much electricity that he'll be able to replace the electricity he started with. But this violates one of the fundamental laws of physics—the conservation of energy. No system can produce more energy at the end than it has at the beginning. With heat loss and work done, the product will always be less usable energy. Once again, Lovins has made the mistake of concentrating on the *capacity* of the system while ignoring the energy required to *fuel* the system. A fleet of Hypercars might indeed have far greater generating *capacity* than the entire electrical grid, but it will still require *energy input*. That input can come only from the existing grid itself—which is what Lovins thinks he can eliminate.



Peter Steiner

What Lovins has invented here is a perpetual motion machine—a machine that runs on its own output. It is the philosopher's stone of physics. It is also the mechanism by which Lovins and his disciples believe the nation can avoid making the difficult choice between coal and nuclear energy.

None of this is to say that conservation and renewables are not worth pursuing. The Bush administration was foolish to defund these efforts—although this week's proposals may change the emphasis. Conservation and renewables should be supported—if only to keep environmentalists happy.

In the end, though, the nation still faces the clear choice it confronted in 1978: coal or nuclear? To this point, environmentalists have tacitly accepted coal. As a result, we now burn 400 million more tons of coal a year than we did in 1980. Yet if greenhouse gases are indeed affecting the earth's climate—as environmentalists themselves believe—that choice must be reexamined. The Bush administration is wisely considering nuclear power. Environmentalists may not agree. But if they don't, they must admit that they choose to go on burning fossil fuels. There are no other alternatives. ♦



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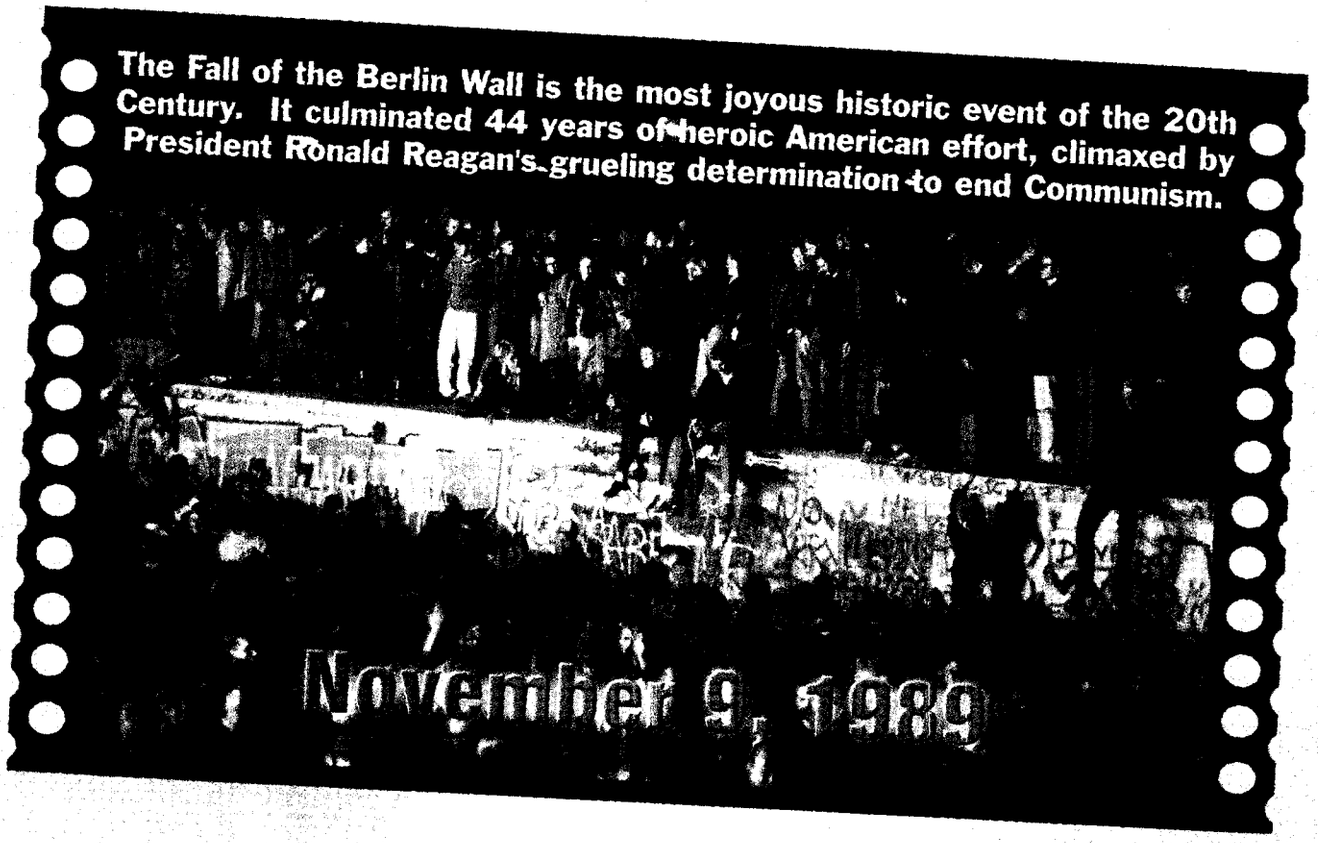


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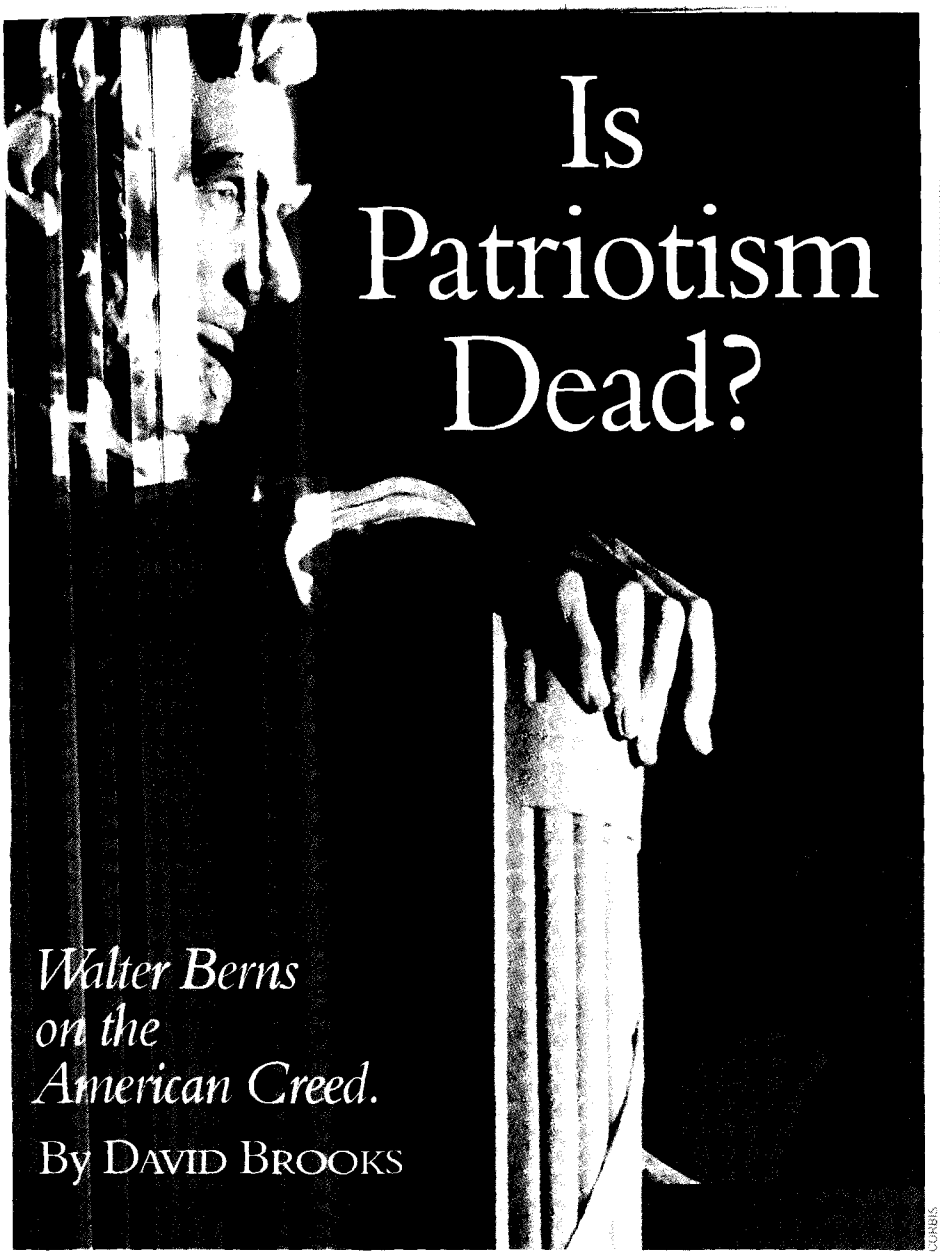

# Is Patriotism Dead?

*Walter Berns on the American Creed.*

By David Brooks

Noah Webster didn't just produce a dictionary; he also wrote one of the most influential school textbooks in American history. It was called *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking*, and it went through seventy-seven editions in the half century after its publication in 1785. It included famous patriotic speeches, the Declaration of Independence, and George Washington's farewell orders to the army, selections from Swift, Pope, and Shakespeare, and a long section from *Cato*, Joseph Addison's play about patriotic honor.

*David Brooks is a senior editor at* The Weekly Standard.

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by Walter Berns
Univ. of Chicago Press, 144 pp., $20

Webster was trying to acquaint children with their own country, to cultivate patriotic pride and to hold up American exemplars. He put a dictum from the French republican Count Mirabeau on the title page: "Begin with the infant in the cradle; let the first word he lisps be Washington." Webster's textbook was eventually supplanted by the McGuffey Readers, which sold 120 million copies between 1836 and 1920, and which performed the same cultural tasks. They also contained patriotic texts, classic readings, and bits of religious instruction (though fewer with each new edition).

But now all that is changed. Americans still love their country, but schools no longer set out to inculcate patriotism as they once did. Indeed, it's not just schools. Across our society, patriotism is tongue-tied, and nationalism, after all the horrors of the twentieth century, is suspect. These days, in short, patriotism is a problem. Most people just find it easiest to avoid the whole issue. They may stand at the playing of the national anthem, and they may tear up during the Olympics, but they store their patriotic emotions in the attic of their hearts.

Walter Berns, the distinguished scholar of American government and now a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, has wrestled with the problems of patriotism in his wise and penetrating new book, *Making Patriots*. Nobody is born a patriot, Berns argues. Patriotic convictions have to be inculcated, and the country depends upon them for its continued greatness.

Berns starts his book with a description of a false patriotism, or at least a style of patriotism that is un-American. It is the patriotism of the Spartan, the citizen who idolizes the state and who has no other god but country. Berns recounts Plutarch's story of a Spartan woman who is informed, after a battle, that all five of her sons were killed. "Base slave," she snaps at the messenger, "Did I ask you that?" The slave informs her that Sparta won the battle. She runs to the temple and gives thanks to the gods.

No one believes that story could have possibly happened, but it illustrates the Spartan view of the loyalty expected from citizens, in which every private feeling was to be sacrificed for love of the state. American patriotism is the opposite of Spartan patriotism because the United States was founded with a declaration of individual rights. So, as Berns notes, in America, rights are primary and duties are secondary. "Defining a public-spirit curriculum for such a people is no easy task," he adds.

It's an especially difficult task in times of peace and prosperity, when we don't feel our lives or property are under threat from any foreign menace, and when there are so many goodies to



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buy and enjoy. If you trade your stock on global exchanges, send your e-mail across the World Wide Web, and then retreat to your vacation spot in Aspen one year, Gstaad the next, what does America mean to you? Or to put it in a more high-flown way (as Berns does, echoing John Locke), "Why should such a man who institutes government in order to secure private rights, have any concern for anyone else? Why should he be public-spirited?"

Berns covers other threats to patriotism. If you feel that your government has treated your people shabbily, as many blacks do, why should you love your country? If you commit yourself to a universal God, why should you divide your commitments by also loving Caesar, the country you happen to have been born into in this world?

He answers these and other challenges to patriotism by emphasizing that America is not just any other nation. He cites Martin Diamond's observation that the concepts "Americanism," "Americanization," and "un-American" have no counterparts in any other country or language. America is a set of beliefs about individual liberty and citizenship as much as it is a piece of land, beliefs expressed in our founding documents, and embodied in our institutions. If Americans don't understand the concept of a "fatherland"—the nation as a parent from which we spring—we do understand and cherish the American creed.

This is not exactly new, but Berns pushes it in a number of subtle ways, applying it to debates over flag burning and the separation of church and state. He also makes a series of arguments that will startle readers. For example, at one point he writes, "We are first of all citizens, and only secondarily Christians, Jews, Muslims, or of any other religious persuasion."

But there is one thread running through *Making Patriots* that is particularly apt for people who worry about modern patriotism. It starts with Berns's observation that when people go to the Jefferson Memorial in Washington they read the words and respect the man, but when people go to the Lincoln Memorial, they read the words and they are moved. Jefferson evokes a reasoned response. Lincoln evokes an emotional response.

This contrast between Enlightenment reason and Victorian feeling runs through the book. It is the contrast between cool Locke and mystical Lincoln—which Berns emphasizes with a chapter on Abraham Lincoln, entitled "Lincoln, Patriotism's Poet." He reminds us that love of country is a passion, which is best stoked and communicated through poetry, and that the more we think of commerce, the less apt we are to pause and feel this emotion. Berns writes, "Poets sing of love or God . . . and sometimes of country, but not of markets, mergers or commercial transactions." It was Lincoln's lyrical phrasing that revived and shaped American patriotism, and connected everyday work to high ideals.

We live in an age that pays very little attention to poetry. Poetry doesn't flourish on the Internet or in e-mail. It's too slow for the modern mind. And as you read Berns you realize that the American mind may not have been secularized, but it has become more prosaic. The difference between the old schoolchildren's readers and today's grade-school texts is that Noah Webster included plenty of room for poetry and poetic impulses, while our children's books anesthetize the poetic spirit.

With *Making Patriots*, Walter Berns has done his part to help us make patriots, but there is still the larger challenge out there, to find a voice that can poetically express our love of country in the age of e-mail, irony, and the market. ♦

# Commie Dearest

*Ronald Radosh's journey from red diapers to second thoughts.* **BY DAVID EVANIER**

In *Commies: A Journey Through the Old Left, the New Left and the Leftover Left*, Ronald Radosh has written a sweet-tempered, thoughtful, mordantly funny account of his reluctant and protracted farewell to the Left—a movement that provided him with girls, pot, LSD, folk songs, identity, and a hell of a good time.

**Commies**
*A Journey Through the Old Left, the New Left and the Leftover Left*
by Ronald Radosh
Encounter, 238 pp., $24.95

Radosh was the prototypical red-diaper baby. He has a picture of himself in 1939, bundled in a stroller for the annual May Day parade sponsored by the Communist party. In *Commies*, he lays out his life in the Left from that beginning: the Jewish-Communist subculture of upper Manhattan's Washington Heights, "progressive" high school, Communist summer camp, and on to college at the University of Wisconsin, where he became a founder of the New Left.

Throughout his memoir, Radosh lets his now anti-Communist head prevail, while not denying the murmurs of his old Communist heart in dealing with the sweet idiocy and childlike innocence of his springtime for Stalin. There are captivating stories here. He writes elegiacally of Pete Seeger concerts and campfire sing-alongs and, more comically, of a trip his high-school class took to a Pennsylvania coal mine. The affluent students, dressed in carefully chosen proletarian garb, travel down a mine shaft to serenade (under the hand-wav-

*David Evanier is the author of* Red Love, *a novel of the Rosenberg case, and* Making the Wiseguys Weep: The Jimmy Roselli Story.



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ing direction of their choral director) a bunch of grizzled, bemused coal miners. The students sing progressive odes boo-hooing their oppressed state, "Dark As a Dungeon" and "Which Side Are You On?"

Seeger was an early idol: Radosh wanted to be a folksinger and banjo picker like him. At Communist summer camp, Seeger would sing "Goodnight Irene" and "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine" at breakfast:

> The camaraderie one felt in sitting with friends and singing the beautiful words and melodies produced a belief that all would be good in the world. . . . Seeger woke us early in the morning, singing the old holler "Wake Up Jacob," with its line "sun's abreakin', peas in the pot and hoecakes bakin'," as he proceeded to grill bacon and eggs for us on the campfire he had built.

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*Singer-songwriter Pete Seeger, who never had a discouraging word about Stalin.*

Songs were weapons, Seeger often said. But what were those weapons in the service of? No longer starry-eyed, Radosh writes that Seeger's "peace" songs materialized during the Hitler-Stalin pact and became war songs after the Soviet Union was invaded. Even later, the harshest words Seeger had for Stalin was that he was a "hard driver" and that the Stalin era contained an "awful lot of rough stuff." Seeger composed a song about the Nazi camp at Treblinka, but would never pen a single line about the Soviet Gulag.

Indeed, a leitmotif of *Commies* is the double standard applied to the struggle for sunny tomorrows. If the Right did wrong, it was unforgivable. If the Left tortured and maimed and killed, it was, one, untrue; two, understandable; and three, due to pressure from the Right—all at the same time. By 1956 the body counts of the murdered under "Socialism" were horrifying. Khrushchev had detailed Stalin's crimes in his famous speech that year, triggering a mass exodus from the American Communist party. Radosh joined just as everyone was leaving. Every Stalinist icon is here, including party historian Herbert Aptheker, with his blazing red hair and blazing eyes. In a hilarious scene, Radosh is accused of white chauvinism and expelled from the Jefferson School by Aptheker for having a "chocolate baby" candy bar in his class. Later appearances are made by every famous figure of the New Left, from Michael Lerner to David Dallinger to Bianca Jagger (who keeps buttoning and unbuttoning her blouse when Radosh interviews her in Nicaragua).

Encounter

*Ronald Radosh's father's union in a 1930s May Day Parade*

At first Radosh moved effortlessly from the old Stalinist Left to the New Left—SDS, the antiwar movement, Cuba, Nicaragua—without any sense of inner crisis. Radosh's readers will quickly see what he confesses it took him years to see: The line that ties it all together, from the old Communist party to the more confrontational New Left, is hatred of the United States. As the old heroes and models of anti-Americanism proved unworthy, there were always new ones to replace them: Castro instead of Stalin, Nicaragua instead of the Soviet Union.

It is the double standard of the Left that begins at last to undermine Radosh's belief. Visiting Havana Gen-



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eral Psychiatric Hospital in Cuba, Radosh notices the glazed and drugged-out expressions on the faces of the patients. The doctor in charge boasts, "We are proud that in our institution, we have a larger proportion of hospital inmates who have been lobotomized than any other mental hospital in the world." Radosh is shocked, but one of his comrades explains harshly, "We have to understand that there are differences between capitalist lobotomies and socialist lobotomies." On the same trip he sees the incarceration of homosexuals as mental patients and infuriates his comrades by writing about it.

In the early 1980s he began to write his book about the Rosenbergs and discovered irrefutable evidence of their guilt, though he had previously been a passionate believer in their innocence. Publication of *The Rosenberg File*, which he coauthored with Joyce Milton, elicited a hailstorm of condemnation from the old and new Left. He also discovered that for most of the Left, it wasn't even a question of the Rosenbergs' innocence: "I always knew they were guilty," Michael Harrington told him when Radosh solicited his support. Harrington said he didn't want to offend pro-Soviet types in his socialist organization and refused to help. Irving Howe, once an outspoken anti-Communist, was even more succinct: "I can't get involved with that," he said and walked away. And for the Stalinist Left, the honest response came from a lawyer, who slammed his fist on his desk and bellowed: "Of course they were guilty. But you can't quote me. My public position is that the Rosenbergs were innocent. . . . What's wrong with what they did? If I were in their place, I would have done the same thing."

Writing about the Rosenbergs was the catalyst for Radosh's long journey away from the Left and toward the real world. He was pummeled badly. "Those who told the truth," he writes, "became the victims of an unprecedented smear attack, one that sought to rescue the myth by blaming the messengers who brought bad news about it." Most significantly, the reaction to *The Rosenberg File* made him move on "to consider the ultimate heresy: Perhaps the Left was wrong not just about the Rosenberg case, but about most everything else."

Wrested by the Rosenberg case out of his protracted innocence, Radosh experienced an unfolding of his personality. At the same moment that he was branded an apostate, a sellout, a coward, and a creep, he was actually acquiring his maturity. The ultimate answer of the Left to his questioning of every horror was the same: moral abdication. "You may be right about what you say about the Sandinistas," a comrade told him, "but while they are under attack by the American empire, we have a responsibility to extend our solidarity to them." Radosh translates; "The time, in other words, was never right." Anti-Americanism, the Left's most precious heirloom from the Vietnam War, "had to be preserved at all costs."

Once all of Radosh's myths had fallen apart—Stalin, Spain, the Rosenbergs, Nicaragua, Cuba, El Salvador—nothing remained. The Left "always looked the other way. The only law [it] obeyed was Don't Look Back—for if it did, the only accomplishments it would see were famine, gulags, and mass death." He came to understand, with Arthur Koestler, that "clinging to the last shred of the torn illusion is typical of the intellectual cowardice that prevails on the Left." Through his baptism under fire, he became a conscientious historian and, in a post-moral politics, an uncommonly honest man. ♦

# Wilde Man

*Christopher Hitchens's literary essays.*

**BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL**

Literary critics who make you roll on the floor laughing are a dime a dozen; what makes Christopher Hitchens rare is that he can do so intentionally. Readers who know Hitchens through his political polemics in the *Nation* and elsewhere will be grateful that he brings the same stylistic toolbox to his literary job.

**Unacknowledged Legislation**
*Writers in the Public Sphere*
by Christopher Hitchens
Verso, 320 pp., $25

In the essays that make up *Unacknowledged Legislation*, there is bluntness, as in the essay that begins "Was T.S. Eliot an anti-Semite? What a question! Of course he was an anti-Semite, if the term retains any of its meaning." There is understatement, as when Dylan Thomas appears in Christopher Isherwood's diaries "and behaves just as every other published recollection of him suggests that he should." There are against-the-grain arguments for forgotten works—Conan Doyle's "grossly underrated" medieval romance *The White Company*, for instance. And there are elegant dismissals of such ballyhooed failures as Tom Wolfe's *A Man in Full*, in which the labored punning "reeks of midnight oil, and also of insufficient midnight oil."

To call these judgments unpredictable or quirky is just another way (odd, when you think about it) of saying they are based on principle. But *what* principle? In politics, Hitchens distrusts ideological "soundness." He supports gay rights but opposes abor-

*Christopher Caldwell is senior writer at* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



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# "Excessive Force"

## Are Israelis overreacting to the present upheaval?

Once again, the Palestinians have risen in bloody upheaval, in the second "intifada", allegedly provoked by (now) Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. Many think that Israel is using "excessive force" in attempting to quell this uprising.

## What are the facts?

**How did it come about?** First of all, the claim that this uprising came about as a result of Mr. Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount is a silly and flimsy pretext. This uprising, now several months old, was carefully planned and continues to be orchestrated by the Palestinian Authority, of which Yasser Arafat is chairman. He pulls all the strings; nothing happens without his approval.

So far, hundreds have died and thousands have been wounded in this uprising -- most of them Palestinians, including children and even babies. Unbelievable though it may seem to us, Palestinian children who have died or who have been injured were deliberately put into the crossfire by their parents. Israeli children who were killed or who were injured were, in every case, victims of snipers, who deliberately targeted those innocents for their bloody purposes.

**Israel cannot permit this situation to continue indefinitely. And the way to stop it in an instant is for Mr. Arafat to give the word to do so.**

There are two kinds of Israeli victims: Those who are ambushed in random terror attacks against civilians, either on the highways or in the cities, by snipers, by suicide bombers or by Arabs deliberately driving their cars into unsuspecting crowds. And then there are the victims of the never-ending war in the streets. It is typically fought with rocks thrown by teenagers and even children in the front, and by soldiers with bombs, Molotov cocktails, and guns in the background. The weapons used are those that the Israelis foolishly gave to the Palestinians for their "police force" or which, in full violation of the Oslo Accord, the Palestinians smuggled into the territory of the Palestinian Authority.

It is true that the number of Palestinian casualties is substantially larger than those of the Israelis. This disparity is partly the result of the decision of the Palestinians to create martyrs and to evoke world sympathy for their plight and -- the ultimate hope -- to have an international force, a U.N. contingent, stationed in Israel or in the territories. The other reason that the number of Palestinian casualties is greater is that the Palestinian mobs attack the Israeli military in large numbers; soldiers, having to defend themselves and avoid being overrun, inevitably cause casualties in protecting themselves.

Just imagine your son or daughter being one of the Israeli soldiers. Howling mobs throwing rocks (yes, they hurt and kill!) attack the soldiers. From the unseen depths of the attacking mob come gunfire, grenades, and flying bottles of flaming gasoline. What, if you were in charge, would you tell the Israeli soldiers to do? Respond, as they do now in most cases, with rubber bullets? Or would this be the time to use live ammunition? You know what the answer is.

**Israel is a civilized and democratic country**. The reality, because Israel is a civilized and democratic country, is that, rather than use "excessive force", Israel is using almost unbelievable restraint, in order to keep casualties to a very minimum. There can be no question that if any real force, let alone "excessive force", were used, the number of casualties would be many times greater. Remember what happened in Somalia? Under similar circumstances, the helicopters were called in and mercilessly gunned down the insurgents! Within minutes, hundreds were killed -- more casualties than in the many months that the Israeli military has allowed this uprising to continue.

Israel's restraint is based on its own valuation of human life, but also on a regard for world opinion, which, in this case, as so many times before, is ready to label Israelis the aggressors or, in the most execrable of tastes, to compare them to the Nazis.

Even though many have died so far in this intifada, the toll would have been much, much greater were it not for the restraint and the discipline of Israeli troops and the measured response policy of the Israeli government. In order to avoid provoking the Arabs, Israel has on occasion even refrained

Can you imagine what the response of government troops would be if such an uprising were to occur in any of the Arab countries -- say, Syria, Saudi Arabia, or Egypt? Many thousands would die. Ultimately, however, if this violence does not abate, Israel will indeed have to use adequate force (not "excessive force") to quell it, even at the risk of international condemnation. But it is clear that Israel cannot permit this situation to continue indefinitely. It must be stopped. And the way to stop it in an instant is for Mr. Arafat to give the word to do so. He has not done that so far. In fact, and because it serves his purposes, he is the key instigator.

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tion. He hates identity politics but thinks the Elgin Marbles should be returned to Greece. He's the same way with literature. On the evidence of these essays, Hitchens chose long ago to apprentice himself to two authors whose legacies are at first sight incompatible: George Orwell and Oscar Wilde.

Hitchens admires Orwell as a man of action, an enemy of circumlocution and pretense willing "to risk calumny and anathema rather than acquiesce in a lie." Indeed, Hitchens aspires to such engagement, and calls himself "one who regards 'pamphleteer' as a title of honor." But it is through Wilde that we get a better glimpse of Hitchens's literary method.

Like Wilde, Hitchens thinks irony can carry considerable intellectual freight. He is a formidable wielder of paradox: Isaiah Berlin's "emphasis on complexity had a strong element of . . . simplification," for instance, or "Those who boast of taking the long view of history are hopelessly wedded to the short-term." Hitchens is desperate to show Wilde as not just a wit but a serious socialist writer (the socialist subtext to *The Importance of Being Earnest*, he argues, is "what gives the play its muscle and nerve"), and by and large, he succeeds. After World War I, Hitchens laments, socialism degenerated into sterile Labourism on one hand and Leninism on the other. But this, he says, "does not entitle us to forget a more noble and defeated tradition, in which Wilde, among others, took an honorable place." If "pamphleteer" is a term of praise for Hitchens, so is "parlor pink."

Orwell and Wilde are Hitchens's *guys*, and their enemies are his. It is not just that Hitchens cannot forgive Sir Edward Carson for his prosecution of Wilde for sodomy; he can't even forgive (as Wilde himself did) the treachery of Wilde's lover, Lord Alfred Douglas. To know that the late British Marxist critic Raymond Williams despised Orwell is to anticipate that he will be measured against Orwell and found wanting. Hitchens accuses Williams of whitewashing the Stalin-

George Orwell

Oscar Wilde

Both photos: CORBIS

ists' murderous record during the Spanish Civil War. "The give-away stuff about 'socialism and the people,'" Hitchens writes, "forces one to the conclusion that Williams—the Williams who joined the Party *after* the Hitler-Stalin pact and whose first published pamphlet was a defense of the 1940 Soviet invasion of Finland—had not by 1971 shed all of his early training in the Stalin school of falsification." It's worth noting that this broadside against Raymond Williams was delivered as the Raymond Williams Memorial Lecture at Hay-on-Wye two years ago.

A writer's integrity is almost a holy thing for Hitchens, something to be sought even if—perhaps especially if—it leaves him as "lonely, derided, near-bankrupt and desperately ill" as Orwell in his later days. There is a solidarity across the ages among those who possess such integrity, and among those who recognize it. H.L. Mencken, Hitchens notes, "composed an extremely well-wrought essay in defense of Oscar Wilde, perhaps in part because he recognized another victim of the jeering, taunting mob." Such defenses, ideally, lead to a contagion of decency. Hitchens views Murray Kempton as a defender of nuance in a highly ideological time, and "it was partly this gift for nuance that caused Kempton to notice, while reviewing the work of Whittaker Chambers, something undeniably authentic beneath the bombast and self-pity. Indeed, it appeared paradoxically as if Chambers had had a real feeling for Marxism, whereas Alger Hiss understood only power and revenge." Conversely, those who scamper towards consensus are *in*decent, contemptible —Isaiah Berlin, for example, who "in every instance . . . known to me, from the Cold War through Algeria to Suez to Vietnam . . . strove to find a high 'liberal' justification either for the status quo or for the immediate needs of the conservative authorities."

In literature as in politics, Hitchens's measuring stick is the individual. He judges by looking at both sides of an issue and entering the battle against the side he thinks is arguing in bad faith. When he describes how Dorothy Parker's final bequest to the NAACP was contested by Lillian Hellman ("surely one of the least attractive women produced by the American 'progressive' culture in this century"),



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he is manifestly less gleeful that the NAACP got the money than that Hellman didn't.

This man's-the-measure turn of mind can lead Hitchens astray. In his essay on the tenth anniversary of the *fatwa* Iran issued against Salman Rushdie (to whom this book is dedicated), Hitchens shows that Rushdie's enemies meant business, murdering his Japanese translator and Norwegian editor, and that Western writers responded with cowardice, slipping out of the room when petitions were being signed and rallying to Rushdie with considerably less readiness than Muslim writers who were actually in the line of fire.

But Hitchens also insists that the rise of Mohammad Khatami's liberalizing regime in Iran, which lifted the *fatwa*, has brought a final victory for Rushdie—and he cannot bear to think otherwise. He rages against a 1998 *Commentary* article in which Daniel Pipes wrote that Rushdie should not necessarily assume the coast was clear. To Pipes's report that "in [Iran's] Parliament, 150 of the 270 members signed an open letter stressing the edict's utter irrevocability," Hitchens hits back feebly that 120 parliamentarians *didn't* sign. This grasping at straws, which Hitchens lambastes without mercy when others commit it, surely has less to do with Rushdie's situation than with Hitchens's dislike of Daniel Pipes and *Commentary*—a dislike imported from other arguments.

In defending Philip Larkin against the criticism of the English Marxist Terry Eagleton and a variety of New Left critics in—of course—the *New Left Review*, Hitchens begins by raising the stakes considerably. "Larkin was not just a bigot or a foul-mouth or a chauvinist, or any other modish personifier of 'insensitivity,'" Hitchens writes. "He was an artist, and he was a thwarted fascist." Hitchens proves his own (textual) sensitivity with a close (if arguable) reading of the poems and a subtle charting of Larkin's debt to the race-and-blood obsessions of D.H. Lawrence. Hitchens pillories the Left for treating Larkin as a propagandist rather than a poet, and the Right for assuming that once the accusation of propaganda is parried, there's nothing left in the poems to argue about. Thus a Hitchens credo, which appears in different forms throughout the book: "Hesitate once, hesitate twice, hesitate a hundred times," he writes elsewhere, "before employing political standards as a device for the analysis and appreciation of poetry."

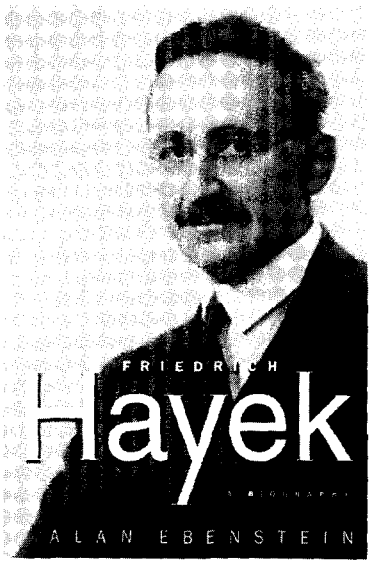
In passages like these, Hitchens is not describing the overlap of literature and politics so much as he is defending the claims of literature *against* the claims of politics. He has his priorities right. A literary view of politics leaves you with a literary politics, but a political view of literature leaves you with no literature at all. In a lecture on historical memory delivered at a Belfast literature festival in 1997, he warns his listeners that we "did not get here from nowhere," "did not arrive without baggage, and would be boring and banal if we had." What is more, we

> cannot be expected to be ashamed of having taken seriously certain ideas of nationality and religion and community. Some imperishable writing and some unforgettable history has emerged from this crucible and become common property even in an age where Faith is the most overestimated of the virtues, and physics more awe-inspiring than religion. . . . Redemption will begin when the life of all free citizens is enhanced in common by music and letters and philosophy, and the qualities of eloquence and irony.

For Hitchens, then, irony is a *redemptive* thing. This is the central paradox of Hitchens himself. He considers irony a paramount cultural virtue, and yet culture in a broad sense is the one thing that he is never, ever ironic about.

So Hitchens's "irony" is not at all the same thing that others on the left mean by the term. To borrow Albert O. Hirschman's distinction, Hitchens seeks a "voice" within Western culture for his politics, while the vast majority of leftist critics seek an "exit" from it. He is interested in arguing literature, not in arguing it away, and of how many politically committed critics (on the left or the right) can that be said? ♦


"A lively intellectual journey"*

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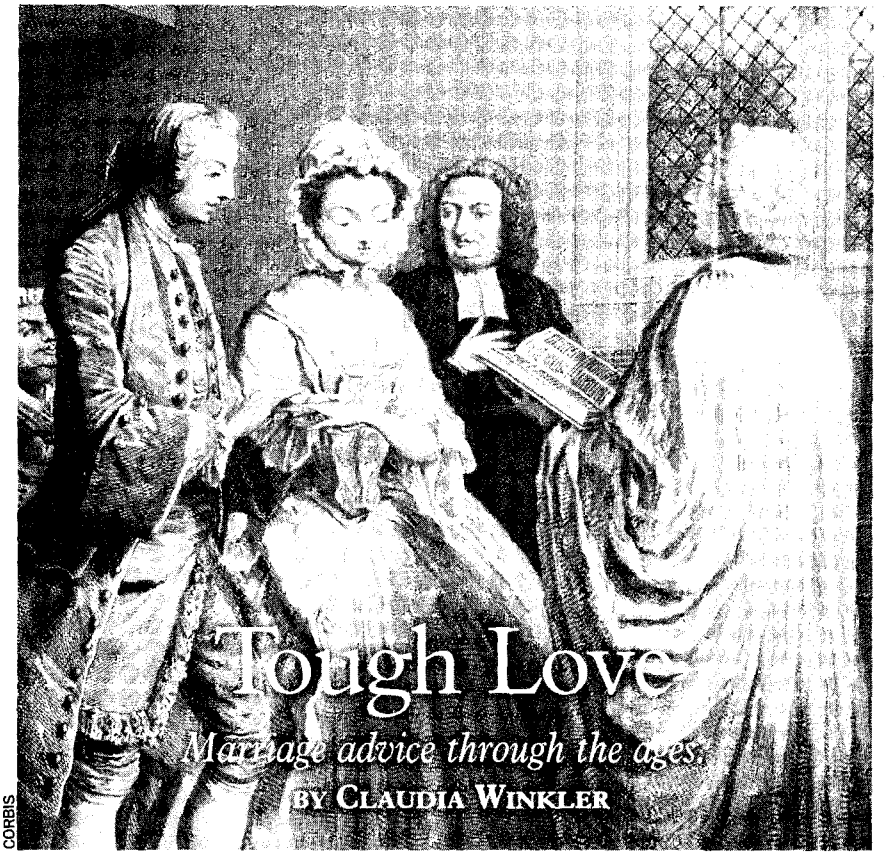

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# Tough Love

*Marriage advice through the ages.*

BY CLAUDIA WINKLER

What—*another* anthology on marriage? Just a year after Leon and Amy Kass of the University of Chicago produced *Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying*, a sophisticated six-hundred-page collection of texts from literature and philosophy, what place can there possibly be for *The Book of Marriage: The Wisest Answers to the Toughest Questions*, edited by Dana Mack and David Blankenhorn, a volume of similar length and format, drawing on many of the same classic sources, and all to the same end of spurring reflection on our most basic human arrangement and social institution?

**The Book of Marriage**
*The Wisest Answers to the Toughest Questions*
edited by Dana Mack and David Blankenhorn
Eerdmans, 620 pp., $30

The answer, it turns out, is a place of honor side by side with the Kasses' work. For Mack and Blankenhorn, who are respectively affiliate scholar at and president of the Institute for American Values in New York, have addressed a somewhat different subject.

The Kasses concentrated on courtship and the decision to marry, with just one of their seven sections devoted to married life itself. Mack and Blankenhorn concentrate instead on the married state full blown, from vows, through children, to death or divorce. Divided into ten chapters, the new book covers such subjects as reasons to marry, intermarriage, money, the headship of the family, and the challenges of old age.

Mack and Blankenhorn's book differs from the Kasses', too, in being a shade less highbrow and approaching its task from a slightly different angle. While the Kasses' selections were all Western, the new anthology includes pieces from Asian, African, and South American sources, from Hindu and Islamic scriptures as well as thoroughly secular thinkers. And where the Kasses' own passionate commitment to the traditional marital ideal was palpable in their book, Mack and Blankenhorn stress their determination not to be starry-eyed: "What we have tried to achieve," they write, "is a source-reader on marriage as realistic about its rewards as about its perils, uplifting in its assertion of the viability of the institution of marriage in contemporary society, yet cautious and aware of the vulnerability of that institution to decay."

For cold realism—and for a taste of the range and imagination of these anthologists—turn to Chapter Eight, on fighting. The first of its six entries is an excerpt from a 1964 history of Christian attitudes toward sex and sanctity in marriage written by a Jesuit priest (who later left his order and married) named Joseph Kerns. It is loaded with quotations from figures in church history acknowledging marriage to be both a trial and a peril. "If a good marriage is slavery," asked Ambrose, fourth-century bishop of Milan, "what is a bad one in which they cannot sanctify each other but cause each other to perish?" "It is clear that the road is dangerous," wrote the great Cistercian, Bernard of Clairvaux, seven hundred years later. "We find ourselves grieving that so many perish on it and seeing so few travel it in the right way."

Next, Mack and Blankenhorn offer a fascinating 1528 letter of pastoral counsel from Martin Luther to a young man whose wife of four years has refused to move to the town where he has a new job. Luther fears that by "softheartedness," the young man has "turned into tyranny that Christian service" that a husband owes his wife. He urges the husband to distinguish between "infirmity" on his wife's part, which is to be borne, and "malice," which must be counteracted. The letter ends, "You are an intelligent man, and the Lord will enable you to understand what I write. At the same time you will recognize how sincerely I wish you to come to an agreement and Satan to be driven off. Farewell in Christ."

Then we hear from that acute student of unhappy marriage George Eliot, in a chilling passage from her last novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1878). Here is lovely, gifted, vain Gwendolen Harleth, now Mrs. Grandcourt, locked in her golden cage with the reptilian rich man she has married to escape being a governess; locked in with the humiliation of having chosen this

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course despite knowing of her husband's longtime mistress and four children, and the further humiliation of knowing that he and his loathsome secretary know that she knows. We see her keeping up appearances before the world but inwardly desperate, and spiritually "in as complete a solitude as a man in a lighthouse."

From there, the chapter moves to Edward Albee's twentieth-century take on boozy domestic barbarism in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* And then, at last, a breath of air: The comic actor Bill Cosby, of all people, is enlisted to convey the flavor of everyday wrangling and making up between long-married spouses, in an engaging passage from his book *Love and Marriage* aptly entitled "Your Beloved Foe."

Mack and Blankenhorn end the chapter with an entirely practical selection: a fifteen-page excerpt from *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* (1999), by John Gottman, a psychologist who has spent years studying the interactions of stable couples. The lessons he has distilled about "emotionally intelligent marriages," where partners disagree and even argue without damaging their deep friendship, are set out in straightforward prose, accessible—and beneficial—to almost anyone.

It's hard to imagine a reflective person reading through this chapter and failing to emerge slightly sobered, his consciousness raised about the destructive potentialities of the married state—but his awareness heightened, too, that some ways of managing it hold more promise than others. And this, one suspects, is the purpose of all the chapters in *The Book of Marriage*. Where the Kasses, alarmed by the confusion about "relationships" they had long observed among their students, compiled a collection that seems to hold up the marital ideal and cry, "Look here! Don't miss this!," Mack and Blankenhorn seem rather to be addressing an audience inured to divorce yet desirous of marriage, and saying to them, "You can do it, but it's bigger than you realize. Do it thoughtfully! Take care!" ♦

# Paper Chase

*Nicholson Baker's defense of the printed word.* **BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ**

Nicholson Baker is best known for his novels, but his latest volume is a lengthy rant against our major libraries and their policies regarding the preservation of old newspapers and books. Written in the warm-tapioca style of modern journalism, Baker's *Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper* has at least the virtue of exposing a serious problem in the contemporary conservation of knowledge. But its effectiveness is undermined by the author's leftist polemics and relentlessly tedious exposition.

**Double Fold**
*Libraries and the Assault on Paper*
by Nicholson Baker
Random House, 288 pp., $25.95

Baker, who previously protested the switch from card catalogues to computers, caused a minor uproar in the San Francisco Bay area a few years ago by his agitation against the destruction of volumes considered redundant by local public librarians. Baker was clued into the disposal of bound volumes of old newspapers by a San Franciscan named Bill Blackbeard, a septuagenarian who collected comic art. Baker learned that libraries had been engaged for some thirty years in cleaning out their collections of such largely forgotten daily newspapers as the *New York World* (founded by Joseph Pulitzer) and the *New York Journal* (owned by William R. Hearst).

One excuse given for selling or, when there are no takers, simply throwing away collections of old newspapers is the refinement of microfilm technology. But, according to Baker, microfilm fades over time, degenerating and providing incomplete images. Baker complains that the digital conversion of text is even worse. He argues at length that newspapers and books are not as fragile as functionaries at the Library of Congress would have us believe. Indeed, the author warns with increasing hysteria, the government is lying to its citizens. Baker thus turns this long-needed investigation of how libraries manage their collections into a hunt for CIA and military mischief. This shift in subject matter gives *Double Fold* a nutty, Californian flavor. Baker recently moved to Maine, but it's obvious where he left his heart.

Words can't describe how thoroughly wacky it is to hitch the wagon of library preservation to the old leftist campaign horses of anti-CIA and anti-Pentagon paranoia, but Baker manages it. A chapter on scientific de-acidification of books turns into a commentary on why American missile launches failed in the 1950s. A reference to a picture (in an annual report of the Council on Library Resources) of Kennedy-era secretary of state Dean Rusk would not, it seems, be complete without noting that Rusk "was that same year trying to figure out whether the CIA should use Mafia hit men or poisons to assassinate Castro."

Baker is obviously among those who think it dastardly to try to get rid of Fidel Castro. He seems not to realize that Castro himself has destroyed many precious, often irreplaceable, examples of pre-revolutionary Cuba's once revered literature. To say nothing about the authors Castro has had imprisoned and killed. Such an exam-

*Stephen Schwartz is the author of* From West to East: California and the Making of the American Mind.



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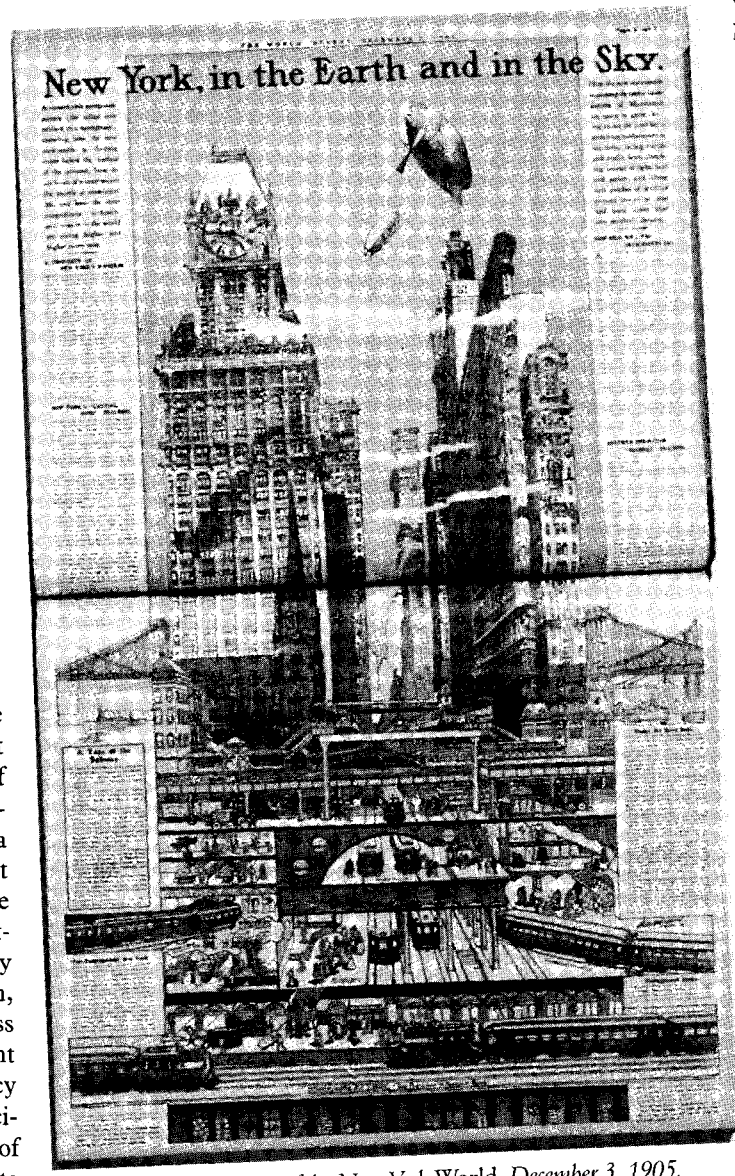
ple should be as alarming to any friend of the written word as, say, the dumping of old copies of the *Chicago Tribune* after they have been microfilmed.

It is nevertheless clear that too many old newspapers and books have been, and are being, junked by libraries. Something has to be done to arrest such cultural vandalism—and as Robert Darnton noted in his *New York Review of Books* treatment of Baker's tome—something is being done: The Council on Library and Information Resources has just issued a draft report recommending measures to preserve books, newspapers, and audiovisual and digital materials. Although written in a professional jargon that is almost self-parody, the council's report does take note of some common-sense possibilities, like the establishment of new regional libraries.

Baker compares the destruction of print resources to the tearing up of railroad tracks across America after World War II—a waste that became apparent thirty years later, when the streetcar systems once written off as obsolete suddenly became fashionable again, under the new title of "mass transit." He is certainly right that modern library policy gives the impression of a society rushing in the direction of the new and abandoning its past achievements. Still, it's doubtful that rotogravure advertising, the star of newspaper production at the turn of the twentieth century, or comics like "The Yellow Kid" will undergo the kind of revival seen in mass transportation.

Indeed, considerations of journalism and newspaper content in general are entirely absent from Baker's harangue. Old newspapers are important to him because he likes to play with them, to fantasize, apparently, that he has just bought a copy of the 1934 *New York World* off the street—fondling history rather like the characters in his novel *Vox* (the book Monica Lewinsky bought as a gift for Bill Clinton), which dealt with people talking dirty to each other on the telephone. He almost never discusses how historians use newspapers or what ordinary people, as well as scholars, are liable to learn from them.




Random House

*An endangered copy of the New York* World, *December 3, 1905.*

The result is that Baker himself is a minor participant in the promotion of historical forgetfulness about which he complains. With a magpie's sense of the life of the mind, he views libraries more as places to look at nifty samples of old printing than as repositories of the past.

Let's be clear: A cadre of leftist academics and politicized librarians have created an Orwellian memory hole down which our collective knowledge of a more civil, even "progressive," American past is being consigned, and that is indeed a matter for great alarm. American libraries, in fact, increasingly resemble intellectual ruins, in which traditional literature and study are giving way to something not very different from video games, and it is disgraceful.

In addition, librarians have—via the godforsaken college-degree system known as "library science"—professionalized themselves into mandarins. The art of bibliography has grown pompous from the advanced degrees now required for even the lowliest job in a local library. Debates over paper and microfilm are merely a reflection of a much deeper crisis. This is a struggle over space—in our minds, hearts, souls, and identities—that the enemies of America hope to fill with lies.

In *Double Fold*, Nicholson Baker is entirely right to hate the destruction wrought by the modern policies of America's libraries. But what he can't bring himself to see is that those policies were born from the leftist political views he embraces. ♦



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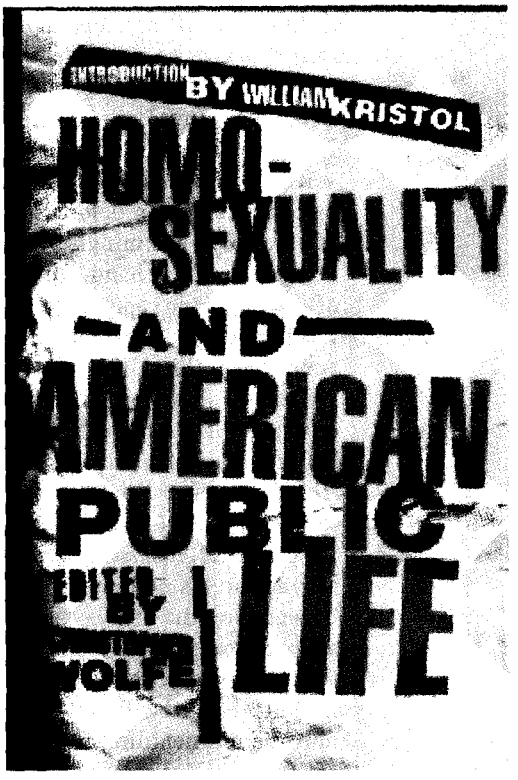
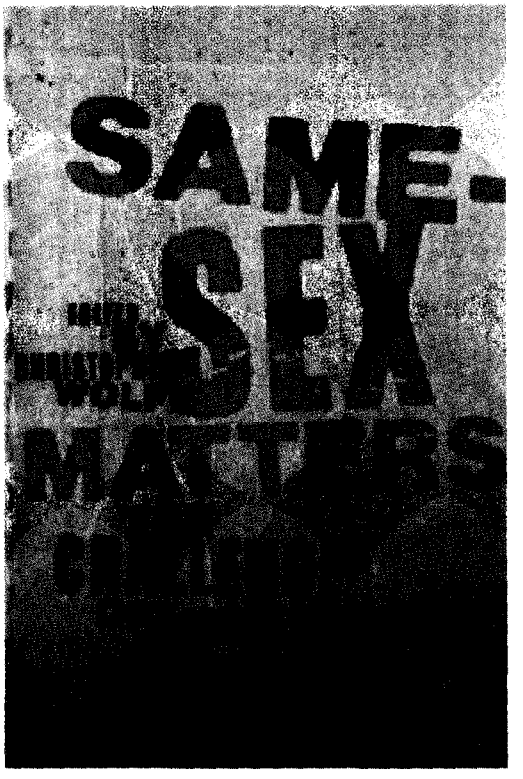
# Hatred and Bigotry?

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# Till We Melt Again

*Does assimilation still work?*

BY FRED SIEGEL

The idea that Los Angeles is the Ellis Island of the late twentieth century was brought home to me a few weeks ago when Antonio Villaraigosa won the first round of voting to become the city's next mayor. Villaraigosa, the son of Mexican immigrants, who has Clinton-like charm and the backing of a left-labor coalition, celebrated his triumph before a largely Latino overflow crowd at Los Angeles's vast Union Station. A gigantic American flag was mounted behind the speakers' podium as the exuberant crowd chanted, "Si se puede, si se puede, si se puede": "Yes we can." The "we" was the Latino unionists who've been organized into a rising political force.

**The New Americans**
*How the Melting Pot Can Work Again*
by Michael Barone
Regnery, 256 pp., $27.95

At one point the crowd, which had generally been facing forward toward the American flag, surged to the back of the room where a friend and I were sitting and chatting about the election. Their smiles were suffused with pride and hope as they squeezed around us in an effort to get close to their hero, the movie-star handsome Villaraigosa, who, unbeknownst to us, was being interviewed for Spanish-language television on a low-rise platform just a few inches behind our chairs. Several of the women smiled at us as if to say, "Don't worry, this is just joy," and then they burst into a chant of "He is present, he is present." It was hard not to be overwhelmed by both the quasi-religious overtones of their chant and the historical echoes. Morris Hillquit, a candidate for Congress, had evoked similar sentiments among the Jewish socialists of Manhattan's Lower East Side in the early twentieth century.

A few days earlier, I attended a meeting at the Hotel and Restaurant Workers building to train canvassers for Villaraigosa. When Art Rodriguez, president of the United Farm Workers, asked the 350 or so assembled how many had never taken part in a campaign before, two-thirds of the overwhelmingly immigrant group raised their hands. In the course of creating civic capital, the campaign was incorporating the new arrivals into American political life.

It was a scene that underscored the optimism, if not the entire argument, behind Michael Barone's *The New Americans: How the Melting Pot Can Work Again*. Barone is the coauthor of the canonical *Almanac of American Politics*, and in his new book he draws on his encyclopedic knowledge of politics and culture to assert that "America in the future will be multiracial and multiethnic but it will not—or should not—be multicultural in the sense of containing ethnic communities marked off from and adversarial to the larger society." We can succeed at ethnic incorporation, says Barone, because we've done it before. It's a problem for which, unlike the Europeans, we already have a working model of success.

Barone devotes most of this high-level primer to the parallels between earlier twentieth-century immigrants and today's arrivals. The first part of *The New Americans* compares the Irish and the blacks, the second part examines the Italians and the Latinos, and the third part (in the loosest of the analogies) takes up the Jews and the Asians. So, for instance, Barone notes that Anglo-American law was a liberation for most groups, but the Irish (who took 120 years to make it into the American mainstream) and blacks have been victims of its abuses. Jews and Asians, each endowed with a heritage that prized learning, have been drawn to educational achievement, while Italians and Latinos placed their hopes in supporting their tightknit

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families through back-breaking labor. "Stupid is he," ran the old Italian proverb, "who makes his children better than himself."

Barone's parallels in *The New Americans* are suggestive—but the comparisons could have been put together in other ways. Though he groups the Irish with blacks, he might equally well have put them with the Latinos: When he writes of the Irish that "the steady arrival of newcomers, contact with the homeland through the immigrant press, and frequent lecture tours by nationalists" combined with regular trips home "perpetuated the inherited culture," he could have been referring to Mexican immigrants.

Still, however, he assembles his parallels, Barone puts a compelling thesis in *The New Americans*: Our history teaches us that the problems we currently have managing immigrants will find a successful conclusion. All we really need to worry about, Barone argues, is the change in American elites. Where once they hastened the process of acculturation, today they retard it with guilt-ridden multicultural theories of group victimization.

This is true, as far as it goes. But like all primers—and this book should be read by every college student in America—it necessarily leaves out a lot. Acculturation hasn't always been a natural process. Take the question of what was once called Germania. Barone notes that 40 percent of revolutionary-era Pennsylvania was German-speaking. But he never again takes up the topic. The Germans were so insular that Ben Franklin despaired of their integration; 140 years later Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig were speaking German to each other in the Yankee dugout. The vast German-speaking islands of the Midwest were deeply hostile to American foreign policy in the first half of the twentieth century. It's common today to dismiss Franklin's fear, but in fact (as UPI analyst Jim Chapin notes) it took two world wars in which we fought against Germany and considerable cultural repression to Americanize the Germanias of the American Midwest.

If, as is often suggested, China is the new Germany, the rising nationalist power of the twenty-first century, might that not put Chinese immigrants with deep ties to their homeland into difficult binds? Some of my mainland Chinese students, although deeply attracted to America, bridle at criticisms of their homeland. The Wen Ho Lee saga may be only the first of many dramas of conflicted loyalty.

And then there are the unprecedented situations produced by recent waves of immigration. Barone is right to be generally upbeat about immigrants' upward mobility, but there are important counter-examples—like the downward mobility of Nicaraguans in South Florida. In New York, the Second-Generation Study being done for the Russell Sage Foundation finds that there are troubling signs of downward mobility among second-generation Jamaicans and Dominicans, two of the city's largest immigrant groups. In the case of the Dominicans, the problem is compounded by a rising rate of welfare dependancy in the midst of welfare reform. What's worrisome is that this decline has come in a period of economic boom. What will a slowdown bring?

*Antonio Villaraigosa*

The case of Latino immigrants in Southern California is also unprecedented. Barone argues that Italians and Latinos have generally chosen an apolitical and non-union path to economic and social success. But the Villaraigosa campaign, in what is surely the most important election held this year, suggests that something new is happening. Even if his left-labor-Latino coalition doesn't win in the runoff round of the city election, it has reshaped Los Angeles's politics and is likely to triumph in the near future. None of the earlier arrivals came in such massive and concentrated numbers (Latinos are already a numerical majority in Los Angeles), or in a continuous immigration; nor did they, as Latinos have, take up residence in an area close to their native country and live on land they could claim was once rightfully theirs. As Mexican-Americans are allowed to vote in Mexican elections, we are going to conduct an experiment in dual citizenship on an unprecedented scale. In the era of free trade and increasingly open borders, there is already an extraordinary direct relationship between Mexican presidents and California governors, which suggests that what's emerging doesn't fit the old patterns. For better or worse, Southern California may be evolving into a new hybrid in which Americanness will be permanently inflected with a Mexican accent.

In the end, there is a reasonable chance that Southern California will succeed at being different from most of the United States—without, in Michael Barone's formulation, ending up "separate" or "adversarial." But even that is not quite what *The New Americans* promised when it suggested that history teaches us not to worry about the Americanizing of our latest waves of immigrants. Barone may well be right that the United States should continue welcoming new immigration, but the full consequences remain to be seen. ♦



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**Increasingly, schools move to restrict dodge ball. What was once shrugged off as a harmless game is now considered aggressive, unwholesome and a cause of injuries by some school administrators. —*New York Times*, May 6, 2001**

## The Oxford History of America

### *The Barbarian Years: 1990-2010*

Twenty-second century parents may have trouble believing it, but back in the early 21st century, Americans engaged in a game called "dodge ball," in which they savagely hurled large reddish spheroids at one another, often causing bruising, scrapes, and, after long periods of running, shortness of breath. But the major damage was psychological, as small children were transformed into hunted animals, scampering frantically for survival in the merciless killing field of the school playground. After dodge ball was banned, crime in America declined by 75 percent, students began sharing their dessert treats with one another, and junior high school boys began listening to Carole King's old album, *Tapestry*.

Following the success of the dodge ball abolition movement, educators across America mounted crusades against other activities that had, for centuries, marred American childhood:

*Tag. A study by the American Association of University Women proved conclusively that as a 9-year-old boy, Adolf Hitler was forced to be "it" in a game of tag. Slow-footed, Hitler was unable to catch any of the other children and thus acquired feelings of objectification which eventually forced him to start World War II and cause the deaths of 35 million people. Tag was finally banned from America in 2013.

*Duck-Duck-Goose. In this game, children were arranged in a circle of terror while one child, armed with absolute authority, designated a condemned child as the goose. The goose was then forced to scamper madly around the circle in a desperate bid to relieve himself of goose status. Psychological scars from this game led to goose-stepping and also contributed to Nazism and World War II.

*Simon Says. Children were instructed to offer blind obedience to a tyrant named Simon who issued arbitrary and ceaseless demands. Those who through carelessness could not conform to the orders from Simon were immediately eliminated. This game led to Stalinism and the Ukrainian famine.

*Pin the Tail on the Donkey. In this game a child was robbed of sight with a blindfold and compelled to drive a sharp instrument into the rear end of a symbolic representation of an innocent animal. Derived from primordial hunting rituals, this game was eventually replaced with "Coax the Hug from the Buddy" in which children told each other how special they were before embracing.

*Blind Man's Buff. This was another game that ridiculed the differently abled. A child was forced to wander sightlessly through a free fire zone of taunting and abuse, thus leading directly to feelings of inadequacy, drug abuse, and teen suicide. Adult guilt over having played this game eventually led adults to give handicapped people the best parking spots.

Fortunately, by the middle of the 21st century, success with cloning experiments meant that little boys could be neutered at birth and drained of all testosterone. It was also discovered that little girls could escape the traumas of childhood and adolescence if they remained in an artificial womb until their 21st birthday, and were fed a nutritional formula through an IV tube. These reforms vast-



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# Putin Shows His True Colors

**Michael McFaul is the Peter and Helen Bing Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution and an assistant professor of political science at Stanford University.**

A year ago, many were asking, Who is Vladimir Putin? A valid question in that this junior-level KGB officer had risen to become prime minister and then president of Russia with amazing speed. After being elected as Russia's second post-Soviet president, Putin said all the right things about markets and democracy. For those who had worked to overthrow Soviet communism, the coming to power of a KGB officer in postcommunist Russia could only be seen as tragic. Nonetheless, this new, young, and energetic leader inspired hope with his statements about a new beginning for Russia.

The verdict may still be out regarding Putin's commitment to market reforms, but today there is no doubt about his antidemocratic proclivities. More than any event in the Putin era, the recent closing of NTV—Russia's only independent national television network—demonstrates unequivocally that **Putin seeks to destroy Russia's already fragile and weak democratic institutions.**

Putin did not personally order the seizure of NTV. Instead, Gazprom—the largely state-owned gas company—exercised its so-called property rights as a major shareholder in NTV to fire the management and leading journalists from the popular television network. Gazprom did the same to shut down *Segodnya,* a popular daily newspaper, and *Itogi,* a weekly magazine. In one week, three media outlets critical of the president were muzzled.

NTV had serious financial problems, but the management was working to resolve its financial woes by securing new investment from Ted Turner. Putin's government blocked the deal. And if Gazprom was only worried about its investments in NTV, then why destroy the value of the company by firing the most popular journalists? The firing of *Itogi*'s staff was even more overtly political since this magazine was actually turning a profit, a rare achievement for a weekly in any country.

Putin apologists claim that he played no role in this "merger and acquisition." And that's the point; if he really cared about freedom of the press, he could have stopped this gross violation of democracy with one public statement. His inaction reveals his true preferences about a free and independent media. Journalists can be free and independent just as long as they do not criticize the president.

**The seizure of NTV and the closure of *Segodnya* and *Itogi* constitute one of the greatest setbacks to Russian democracy in the last ten years.** Competitive elections cannot occur without a free press. Corruption cannot be fought without a free press. Elected government officials cannot be held accountable without a free press. And, ultimately, Russia cannot become a normal European country without a free press.

Putin continues to believe that these developments at home do not affect his foreign policy mission abroad. He has stated numerous times that he wants to see Russia become a full member of Western institutions, such as the European Union and the G-8. Western leaders need to make it clear that the EU and the G-8 do not accept applications from dictatorships. The sooner Putin realizes the costs of brutish activity at home for his agenda abroad, the better.

— *Michael McFaul*

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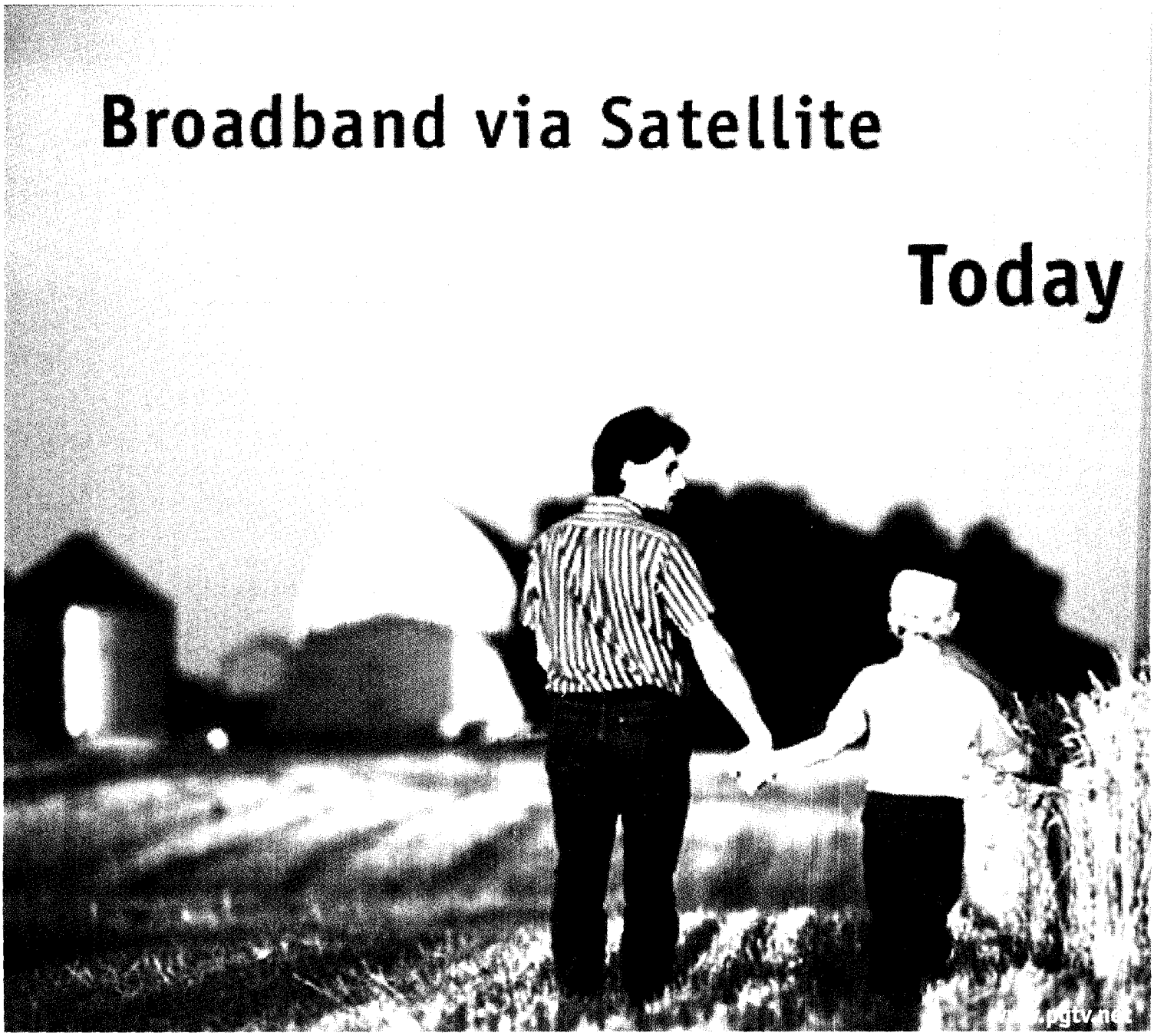

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